

Syria to free 5,000 under amnesty bill

DAMASCUS (AFP) — Syria is preparing to free more than 5,000 prisoners under an amnesty bill presented to parliament last week by President Hafez Al Assad, officials said Monday. "If the law is approved without amendments, more than 5,000 prisoners sentenced before November 1995 will be freed, an official said, adding that 13,600 people in total were held in the country's jails. The official, who said Syria had "several dozen political prisoners, including around 20 members of the (banned) Muslim Brotherhood," indicated that most of those freed would be prisoners jailed for economic crimes. The proposed amnesty was presented to parliament on Thursday to mark Mr. Assad's 25th anniversary of his accession to power. The new bill, which focuses on economic crimes including those involving foreign currency, envisages reducing life sentences handed down by economic security courts to 20 years of hard labour. Syria freed 1,300 political prisoners, including members of the Muslim Brotherhood and supporters of the jailed communist leader Riad Al Turk, under an amnesty in November.

Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published by the Jordan Press Foundation
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Yasser Arafat begins Gulf tour

DOHA (AFP) — Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat arrived here Monday for his first tour of the Gulf Arab states since he infuriated them by supporting Iraq during the 1990-1991 Gulf war. The official Qatar News Agency said Mr. Arafat, president of the autonomous Palestinian Authority (PNA), was welcomed by the emir of Qatar, Sheikh Hamad Ben Khalifa Al Thani, and senior Qatari officials. Sheikh Hamad and Mr. Arafat will study "ways to activate bilateral cooperation and the Middle East peace process," the Palestinian representative here, Yassin Al Sharif, told the press. Mr. Arafat on Sunday welcomed the scheduled restart of the frozen peace talks between Syria and Israel on 27. Mr. Arafat is due next in Abu Dhabi for talks with the president of the United Arab Emirates, Sheikh Zayed Ben Sultan Al Nahayan, authorities said. Doha announced in October the establishment of a holding company capitalised at \$250 million designed to invest industrial projects in the autonomous Palestinian areas. The UAE has said it would finance the construction of homes and subsidise the medical needs of Palestinians.

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Peres unveils negotiating points accepted by Assad

TEL AVIV (Agencies) — Prime Minister Shimon Peres said Monday that Syria had agreed to a nine-point programme for negotiations which could produce a final peace agreement before Israeli elections in October. Speaking to a closed-door session of his Labour Party group in parliament, Mr. Peres said the negotiating principles had been accepted by Syrian President Hafez Al Assad as the basis for talks to begin next week, according to deputies who attended the meeting. He said a tenth point proposed a summit meeting with Mr. Assad, but was not accepted by the Syrian leader.

"There is an exceptional opportunity to make peace with Syria," he was quoted as telling the Labour members of the parliament, or Knesset. "We have 10 months until the elections. If it is possible to reach a good agreement, there is no reason not to go ahead with it before the elections," he said. "I can't remember a time when Syria as much in favour of peace as today."

Sheikh Sabah retracts resignation submitted in dispute over Jordan

KUWAIT CITY (Agencies) — Kuwaiti Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al Ahmad Al Sabah, who had announced he was resigning after a clash with the prime minister, withdrew his decision at the request of the emir on Monday. "On the instructions of Emir Jaber (Al Ahmad Al Sabah)... I will continue my activities to serve the interests of my country and my people," Sheikh Sabah told journalists after a meeting with the ruler of Kuwait. In an interview with the Kuwaiti newspaper Al Qabas published earlier the same day, he said that "differences over foreign policy" had prompted his resignation. "I don't think I'll reconsider my decision," he said, adding the resignation was handed in during a meeting of the cabinet on Sunday.

Communists leading Russian election, but West unalarmed

MOSCOW (R) — Communists emerged on Monday as the big winners in Russia's parliamentary election ahead of nationalists and the pro-government party, sending ripples of concern but no shockwaves abroad. Cashing in on discontent with hardships under market reforms, the Communist Party led with 21.9 per cent of the votes after almost half the ballots had been counted from Sunday's election to the State Duma (lower house). Ultra-nationalist Vladimir Zhirinovskiy's Liberal Democratic Party (LDPR), defying its critics, won 11.1 per cent. Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin's centre-right Our Home is Russia bloc was third with 9.6 per cent. "This is a complete rejection of the old radical system. The system has collapsed and become bankrupt," Communist Party leader Gennady Zyuganov told a news conference.

Bosnia peace operations pick up momentum

TUZLA (Agencies) — U.S. Air Force transport planes flying out of Aviano in Italy, landed at an airbase here Monday — the first to arrive in five days — kicking off a stalled U.S. mission. The planes flew in men and equipment based at the U.S. airbase at Vicenza, U.S. spokesman Major Garrie Dorman said. Hampered by dense fog, U.S. forces have been unable for four days to fly into Tuzla, the command centre in northern Bosnia for the 20,000 U.S. soldiers who are to start enforcing the Bosnian peace treaty. Maj. Dorman said 27 flights were planned during the day Monday with planes arriving every five or ten minutes. As steady drizzle fell at the U.N.-run airbase in the Majevica hills near Tuzla, Maj. Dorman said it was a "huge relief" to have finally landed a plane after the problems of recent days. The planes' arrival allows U.S. radar staff at Tuzla to calibrate the radar equipment at the Spartan airbase and should in theory mean that planes can fly in even if fog returns, radar operator Sergeant Perry Pennington said. A formal transfer of authority from the United Nations to the NATO-led force in Bosnia is due to take place on Wednesday in Sarajevo, following the signing of the Bosnian peace treaty in Paris last week and U.N. and

drawal from the Golan as part of a peace deal with Syria.

"I am considering a stepped up withdrawal from the Golan Heights because it is better to jump a chasm in one step rather than two," he said.

Foreign Minister Ehud Barak was quoted by Israeli radio Monday as saying that Mr. Peres could soon announce to the Knesset that Israel recognised Syria's sovereignty over the Golan. A senior official close to Mr. Peres reiterated after the Labour Party meeting that "it is possible that the withdrawal from the Golan will be rapid and in one sole movement."

Israeli policy under Mr. Peres' assassinated predecessor, Yitzhak Rabin, was to offer a phased withdrawal from the Golan over a period of almost four years to test Syrian intentions. Mr. Peres said another proposal was that "calm must be observed along the Israeli-Lebanese border."

The senior official said this

(Continued on page 7)

Al Israa Wal Miraj marked

AMMAN (Petra) — Jordan, along with the Arab and Islamic nations, Tuesday celebrates Al Israa Wal Miraj, a religious feast marking the Prophet Mohammad's nocturnal journey to heaven.

The Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs on Monday organised a ceremony at the Islamic Cultural Centre of the King Abdullah Mosque in Amman attended by His Majesty King Hussein, His Royal Highness Prince Hanzeh, Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker and senior government officials.

Minister of Awqaf Abdul



His Majesty King Hussein, Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker, Royal Court Chief Marwan Al Qasem and other officials on Monday attend a ceremony making Al Israa Wal Miraj (Petra photo)

Salam Abbadi was among several dignitaries who delivered addresses and referred to the King's relentless efforts over the years to safeguard and restore the Al Aqsa Mosque and the Dome of the Rock and the other holy places in Jordan and Palestine.

Eritreans capture disputed Red Sea island, Yemen says

SANAA (Agencies) — Yemeni warplanes on Monday attacked Eritrean forces who captured a disputed Red Sea island after a three-day battle in which at least nine soldiers died, officials said.

The island was seized when the Eritreans launched a "violent attack" on Monday, shattering a ceasefire which had gone into effect at midnight (2100 GMT Sunday) and that it was being respected.

Radio Asmara said presidents Ali Abdullah Saleh of Yemen and Isaias Afewerki of Eritrea had agreed to form a four-member committee to oversee the ceasefire: A Yemeni, an Eritrean and two U.S. military attaches.

The U.S. embassy in Sanaa said it could not confirm Americans were taking part.

The Eritrean Foreign Ministry said Monday it would release more than 180 Yemeni soldiers taken prison

bours after its fall was announced by Yemen, which vowed to take back the territory by force.

A ceasefire had been announced at dawn by Asmara Radio in Eritrea. A source close to the Yemeni government said here earlier that a truce had taken effect at midnight (2100 GMT Sunday) and that it was being respected.

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because it believed the dispute should be resolved "through negotiations and international legality."

Eritrea acknowledged it had lost six men, with another three wounded, while Yemeni government sources in Sanaa said its forces suffered three men killed and around 12 wounded.

On the island were a small number of civilians working on a tourist resort as well as 500 Yemeni troops who had been garrisoned there since tension flared last month, but their fate was not known.

Asmara said Eritrean forces had destroyed a Yemeni helicopter, while maritime officials in Yemen said Eritrean forces had shelled a Russian ship, fearing it was carrying Yemeni troops.

Eritrea's ambassador to Kenya, Beyene Russom, denied the Yemeni report and

(Continued on page 7)

Nablus sweep seen to reflect Arafat's anti-militant stand

NABLUS (Agencies) — Palestinian officials pledged Monday to crack down hard on crime and unrest in newly autonomous territories after police dismantled an armed gang which had terrorised this city for nine months.

Acting amid mounting unease in Israel over the prospect of an upsurge of cross-border crime and political violence from Palestinian-controlled zones on the West Bank, hundreds of Palestinian police arrested Ahmad Tabouk and 22 of his followers over the weekend.

Some 300 policemen raided the old city in Nablus for several hours Sunday in a final push to arrest Mr. Tabouk five days after the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) took control of the city from Israeli occupation troops.

Sporadic shooting was reported during the operation but Palestinian officials said Monday that Mr. Tabouk, 31, surrendered without a fight late Sunday after being surrounded by police in his family's old city home.

"What is happening is normal," said General Mahmoud Aalul, the new PNA governor of Nablus. "In no way will we deal softly with outlaws," he said.

"Security is the main priority for the Palestinian Authority. It is the key to development. There can be no life, no economy and no stability without implementing security," he said.

An Israeli human rights group meanwhile demanded that charges be filed against Mr. Tabouk, who is suspected of having killed at least three suspected collaborators and wounded 20. Mr. Tabouk has been taken for questioning to PNA police headquarters in the West Bank town of Jericho.

Mr. Tabouk and his gang of several dozen gunmen called themselves the Fateh Hawks and claimed they acted on behalf of Mr. Arafat's security forces. They controlled the streets of Nablus during the past few weeks, shooting in the legs

(Continued on page 7)

PNA and Hamas launch dialogue

CAIRO (Agencies) — The Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) and the hard-line group Hamas met here Monday to settle their differences and prevent a "new Afghanistan" of civil violence between Palestinians.

But Hamas, in a first session of reconciliation talks, stuck by its boycott of upcoming self-rule elections and refused to renounce its campaign of anti-Israeli attacks, despite PLO hopes to draw it into the Jan. 20 vote.

"The Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas) will not participate in elections in any way, directly or indirectly," Mohammad Nazzal, a member of the Hamas delegation, told journalists during a break.

"Hamas's policy is to continue the Palestinian resistance as long as the Israeli occupation is in place," Mr. Nazzal said.

(Continued on page 7)

No Crown Prince visit in January, Israel says

By P.V. Vivekanand
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Israel on Monday denied reports that His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan was scheduled to visit the Jewish state next month and said that while there was a standing invitation to the Crown Prince to visit, no specifics had been finalised.

Shimon Shamir, the Israeli ambassador to Jordan, hinted, however, that the Crown Prince could be visiting Israel after the Holy Month of Ramadan.

The ambassador also reiterated that there was no deliberate Israeli refusal to allow a group of more than 500 Jordanian personalities to visit the West Bank to participate in Palestinian celebrations marking the

launch of self-rule in Nablus. He said the group's application was submitted too late to be processed in time for the trip on Friday.

On Israeli media reports that the Crown Prince was scheduled to visit Israel in January, the ambassador said:

"There is indeed a standing invitation to the Crown Prince to visit Israel, but no specifics have been finalised. The visit would take place at the right time and (under the) right circumstances."

"Any information on topics to be discussed is also unfounded," he added.

Pressed further, the ambassador said the visit would "certainly not take place before or during Ramadan" implying that it could

(Continued on page 7)

Newspapers cautioned over Shbeilat inquiry

By a Jordan Times
Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The Press and Publications Department on Monday cautioned newspapers that it was illegal to publish the proceedings of the investigation of the case that the general prosecutor has raised against Jordan Engineers Association President Leith Shbeilat.


Mohammad Amin, director of the department, sent a letter to the Jordan Times and other publications saying that they should refrain from publishing the proceedings of the investigation in accordance with Article 42 of the Press and Publications Law, which, he said, "bans the publication of court proceedings and investigations before the issuance of a final verdict and obtaining permission from court."

Mr. Amin said he acted upon the request of the general prosecutor at the State Security Court where Mr. Shbeilat is expected to be tried on charges of sedition and slandering His Majesty King Hussein.

Nothing in the Press and Publications Law, however, bans the publication of information on cases that are being tried at court and does not refer to investigations being carried out by the prosecutor general.

Article 42 of the Press and Publications Law, which Mr. Amin quoted as legal basis for his request, says: "It is prohibited to publish the minutes of cases that are being tried at courts before the issuance of the final verdict and unless the court permits that."

(Continued on page 7)



CONGRATULATIONS

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Setting New Standards

هنا عندنا اتصل

U.S. team praises political shifts in Palestinian scene

AMMAN (J.T.) — An international delegation organized jointly by the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI) and the Carter Centre has concluded a second pre-election mission to review the Palestinian electoral process in the West Bank, Gaza Strip and East Jerusalem. After an intense week of observation and analysis, a statement by the joint mission said, the delegation was encouraged by the emerging focus of the political discussion on democratic procedures that has occurred in recent days among groups across the political spectrum. Despite a substantially compressed timetable, the registration process seems to have gone rather well, and the prospects for an election without violence or disruption have improved over the last month, "the peace process has permitted elections; in turn, it now appears that free elections could strengthen the peace process."

The delegation includes Ambassador Harry Barnes and Dr. Robert Pastor from the Carter Centre; Dr. Alex Grigoriou, former member of the Latvian Parliament; Dr. Mohammad Gueussou, leader of the Socialist Union of Popular Forces in Morocco; and Thomas O. Melia, Senior Associate at NDI. The delegation held meetings with Yasser Arafat and officials of the Palestinian National Authority (PNA); leaders of virtually all political parties and groups; journalists and human rights activists; civic leaders, domestic observers, candidates and election officials; and Israelis.

Following are major excerpts from the delegation's statement, a copy of which was sent to the Jordan Times yesterday:

Throughout the pre-election period, NDI and Carter Centre representatives based in the West Bank and Gaza Strip will continue to monitor preparations for the elections, voter and candidate registration, the campaign, political environment, media coverage of the elections, the role of security forces and voter education efforts. At the time of the elections, NDI and the Carter Centre will organize a multinational delegation of election and regional experts, elected officials, and political party leaders, led by former U.S. President Jimmy Carter.

The delegation was encouraged to hear Palestinian leaders, including those from Islamist groups, describe elections as the basis of political legitimacy and the key to long term stability. These leaders told us that they want the elections to proceed without disruption or violence, whether they eventually choose to participate or not. Chairman Arafat is presently engaged in a dialogue with

Egyptian actress runs afoul of lawyers for 'immoral' photo

CAIRO (AFP) — Two Muslim fundamentalist lawyers have launched legal proceedings against a well-known Egyptian actress for appearing "practically naked" in a photograph published in a film magazine.

Abdul Fatah Al Waraki and Ayman Abdul Futuh told AFP on Sunday they want actress Yusra to go to prison for "breaching public morals" by appearing in a camisole in the photograph, published on Nov. 18.

They are also bringing charges against the editor and two other employees of the magazine, Al Cinema Wal Nasa, that published the picture. The trial is to open Dec. 27.

10 PNA ministers resign ahead of elections

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (Agencies) — Ten ministers in Yasser Arafat's 18-member cabinet have resigned in order to run in the Palestinian general elections, one of the ministers confirmed Monday.

Mr. Arafat, meanwhile, formally registered his candidacy for president, so far the only contender for the job. Two others, a businessman and a social worker, have said they would challenge Mr. Arafat, but have not yet filled out the applications.

Palestinians have two votes in the Jan. 20 elections, one to select members of the 83-seat council that will administer the West Bank and Gaza Strip and a second for the president of the Palestinian National Authority (PNA).

Unlike his ministers, Mr.

Ten members of Mr. Arafat's appointed cabinet submitted their resignations during a cabinet meeting Friday in the West Bank town of Nablus, but the move was only made public Monday.

Social Affairs Minister Itamar Wazir said Mr. Arafat asked her and the other nine ministers to stay on the job through Wednesday. After that, deputy ministers will be on the job through Wednesday. After that, deputy ministers will be in charge. Mr. Arafat, sending a representative, had registered himself as candidate for president Sunday at the headquarters of the elections commission in the West Bank town of Jericho, said Abdul Nasser Mekki, director of the Jericho office.

Mr. Arafat is not required to resign from his post as head of the PNA in order to run.

Mr. Arafat's Fateh movement was to submit its candidates' lists for the 16 electoral districts last Thursday. However, there has been in-fighting over the selection of names, with local activists complaining that Mr. Arafat is trying to dictate who will run.

"The main reason for the delay is the conflict between what the people want and what the leadership wants," said Salah Tamari, a prominent Fateh member who is running in the Bethlehem district.

Ehab Barghouti, spokesman for the elections commission, said Monday that the number of council members had been increased from

82 to 83 in order to give an assured seat to the Samaritans, a 600-strong sect whose followers split off from Judaism 2,800 years ago and now live in two communities in Israel and the West Bank.

Architect collects signatures

An architect in Hebron on the West Bank is collecting signatures to challenge Mr. Arafat in the presidential elections.

"Of course I want to win," said 40-year-old Ali Tamimi. "I'm for peace, a better economy and for a better life, especially a better life."

Dressed in suit and tie, Mr. Tamimi has been pounding the muddy streets of Hebron and knocking on doors to round up the 5,000 signatures he needs to challenge Mr. Arafat.

Palestinians prepare for historic Christmas

BETHLEHEM (AFP) — Palestinian Christians are preparing with joy their first Christmas in Bethlehem under self-rule, although they remain guarded about being such a small minority in an overwhelmingly Muslim population.

Israeli troops are to withdraw from Bethlehem, the birthplace of Jesus Christ, after 28 years of occupation on Thursday as part of the accord extending Palestinian autonomy across the West Bank.

It will be the first time in history that Christmas celebrations are held in Bethlehem under Palestinian rule, and they will be attended by Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat.

"We have suffered so much under the occupation," said Hanna Nasser, the deputy mayor of Bethlehem. "The Christians represented 25 per cent of the population under British rule (in Palestine before the creation of Israel in 1948) and today number only 2.5 per cent in the territories."

In Bethlehem itself, only 30 per cent of the Biblical town's 30,000 residents are

Christian, although they represented the overwhelming majority in 1948. "I am worried, especially in the economic area," Nasser said. "Since the beginning of the autonomy, I have seen no change. The expected Palestinian investors have not arrived."

However, the participation of Mr. Arafat, a Muslim, in the Christmas celebrations is seen as a boost.

Mr. Nasser said Mr. Arafat's visit "will give us more confidence." Mr. Arafat's wife, Suha, is from a Christian family.

The army withdrawal is to take place three days later than scheduled so work can be finished on a bypass road to allow Jewish settlers to avoid travelling through Bethlehem, but Israel has said the delay should not affect the planned Christmas celebrations.

Mr. Nasser, himself from a Catholic family that immigrated here from Arabia four centuries ago, said Palestinian Christians have suffered an exodus over the past 40 years, mainly for economic reasons.

"There are 50,000 families from Bethlehem who

have emigrated and they will not come back," he said. "About 80 per cent of them are in Latin America and the rest in North America and Australia."

"Our birthrate is also much lower than that of the Muslims," he said.

Bishara Daud, a Palestinian representative of the Greek Orthodox community in Bethlehem, said it was "the Israelis who encouraged the discrimination."

"When the Muslim fundamentalist group Hamas was formed, they tried to create, without success, a Christian equivalent, the Hamam — the Christian Resistance Movement," Mr. Daud said.

Mr. Daud said he has seen no friction between Muslims and Christians in Bethlehem. The Greek Orthodox church has about 40,000 Palestinian followers, and is the oldest Christian community in the holy land.

"If there are incidents, they are personal conflicts that are misinterpreted, or political differences," said a Bethlehem inhabitant who

gave his name as Elie.

Mr. Daud said he is "first a Palestinian, then a Christian." He plans to run as a candidate in the first Palestinian general elections on January 20 to set up a self-rule council.

"I will be an independent candidate with the programme: Free our land, including Jerusalem, capital of Palestine," he said.

The elections are also important for Christians in general, who will have six seats reserved for them on the 83-member autonomy council.

"I am against these Christian seats, it is in one way the beginning of discrimination, but the moment we do not have a state, so I accept it for now," Mr. Daud said.

"There are so few of us, that without these seats we would have no chance of getting an elected representative," Mr. Nasser added.

He noted, however, that Christian schools include numerous Muslim students. "It is a guarantee of tolerance, for a long time to come," he said.

Hamas leader's wife fears for his safety

NEW YORK (R) — The wife of the political leader of the Muslim fundamentalist group Hamas says her husband is innocent of terrorism charges and fears for his safety if he is extradited to Israel.

"I fear him being sent to Israel because I don't believe he will get a fair trial. We know what goes on in the prisons of Israel," said Nadia Al Ashi, wife of Musa Abu Marzuq, in her first interview since her husband's July arrest.

"We know of people who have left the (Israeli) prison and have come out with something wrong with them... parts of their bodies are damaged or they are psychologically different," she said late on Saturday.

Ms. Abu Marzuq, 32, like her husband a Gaza-born Palestinian, said she fears for the life of herself and her six children, aged between three and 15, in the United States.

She said she was concerned about the kind of justice her husband would receive during the U.S. extradition process.

Asked if her husband would set a fair hearing before U.S. District Judge Kevin Duffy, she replied in Arabic, Hebrew and English, "no, no, no. He does not like Arabs or Jewish lawyers if they defend Arabs."

U.S. immigration officials stopped Mr. Abu Marzuq at John F. Kennedy airport in New York on July 25 because his name was on a list of suspected terrorists.

Israel wants him extradited to face trial on charges of complicity in 10 "terrorist attacks" carried out by Hamas, a group opposed to the Middle East peace process, and for numerous murders.

Mr. Abu Marzuq, 44, has lived in the United States for 14 years and won an immigration green card in a government lottery five years ago.

He has not been charged with any crime but is being held at the Metropolitan Correctional Centre, a federal prison in Lower Manhattan, at Israel's request.

Speaking at the office of her husband's lawyer Stanley Cohen, Ms. Abu Marzuq said she was "shocked and surprised" when officials strip searched her and her children when they arrived in New York from the United Arab Emirates.

She said her children still have nightmares.

She also said an address book found during the search was not a list of suspected terrorists as alleged by the FBI.

Zeroual warns rebels of full vigour of law

PARIS (R) — Algeria's President Liamine Zeroual vowed on Sunday to pursue the battle against militants trying to overthrow him and to crack down with the full rigour of the law.

But in his first speech since being sworn in as president after last month's presidential election, he also recalled his offer of clemency — pardon or reduced sentence — to those who surrendered.

Addressing the judiciary at the start of their new session, Mr. Zeroual repeated that Algeria was "irrevocably committed to democratic pluralism and the free market economy."

The president, suggesting clearly that guerrillas no longer had popular legitimacy since more than 61 per cent of voters had given him their support, said:

"Barbaric acts of terrorism are now judged for what they are — criminal acts perpetrated against all the nation, crimes which the nation has condemned without appeal, crimes which the state will fight without respite, crimes which Algerian justice must punish with all the rigour of the law."

"A few days ago I asked the nation to put all its energies into promoting the clemency offer. Today I ask the judiciary to be committed

to this enterprise... for the sake of reconciliation and national unity."

In his address, carried by the official Algerian news agency APS and broadcast on state radio, Mr. Zeroual, a former general, also promised to fight corruption, bureaucracy and regionalism.

These are among the main grievances of many of the country's 28 million people and a source of mistrust between them and the rulers.

Up to 40,000 people have been killed in Algeria's violence pitting guerrillas against army-backed government forces since early 1992 when authorities scrapped a general election which the Islamists were poised to win.

Mr. Zeroual has pledged to end the four-year-old violence through dialogue with law-abiding opposition members.

His pledge has been answered in the past few weeks by an escalation of rebel attacks in which scores of people perished, including eight villagers massacred in a raid last weekend near Algiers.

On Sunday, Algerian security forces showed they have not eased up their relentless hunt for militants, saying they had killed 45 in their latest search operations in seven areas.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Cyprus to court-martial soldier caught by Turkey

NICOSIA (R) — A Greek-Cypriot soldier just out of a jail in Turkish-occupied northern Cyprus will now be court-martialled by his superiors for fraternising with the enemy, defence sources said on Monday. A Defence Ministry source told Reuters George Karotsakis, 19, would appear before a military court soon to face charges of abandoning his post and fraternising with the enemy. The charges carry a maximum sentence of six months in jail. "The procedure has already started. He will be charged and court-martialled," the source said. Karotsakis, who was manning a National Guard post in a Nicosia suburb of capital Nicosia, strolled over to the Turkish sentry post opposite for a cigarette and chat with a Turkish soldier on Nov. 3 when he was caught. He was released a month later.

Tonnes of Taliban munitions destroyed in blast

KABUL (AFP) — A massive blast has destroyed tonnes of ammunition held by the Taliban militia at a depot southwest of the besieged Afghan capital, defence ministry sources said Monday. About 50 truckloads of rockets, tank and artillery rounds and small arms ammunition were destroyed in the explosion in Taliban-held Wardak province late Saturday, they said. No independent confirmation of the explosion was immediately available. "It was a huge stockpile of ammunition which had been destined for the Taliban fighters battling our forces around Kabul," an official said. "This constituted a significant material loss to the enemy," he added, without specifying what caused the blast.

Iraq frees Saudi national — Red Cross source

BAGHDAD (R) — Iraq has freed a Saudi national accused of entering the country illegally and sent him home under the auspices of the Red Cross, said a source at the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) on Monday. "We handed him (back)... it was done yesterday (Sunday)," said a source at the ICRC's Baghdad office. Newspapers quoted a statement from Iraq's Foreign Ministry saying "the Saudi national, Hamid Inayzan Mohammad Al Utaibi, was handed back to his country through the Iraqi border town of Safwan between Iraq and Kuwait." The Foreign Ministry statement said the Saudi was released in accordance with presidential decision No. 78 issued on Sept. 14, 1995 granting pardons to all Arabs jailed in Iraq. The Foreign Ministry statement said the Saudi was serving a two-year prison sentence for entering Iraq illegally. It made no mention of when the Saudi entered the country or when his sentence began.

Turkish police seize 80 kg of heroin

ISTANBUL (AFP) — Turkish police seized 80 kilograms of pure heroin hidden in compartments of a car here at the weekend, security officials said Monday. They said eight people, all Turks, were detained in connection with the incident. The heroin was destined for Western Europe, where it would have had a market value of about \$10 million. Police in Turkey, which is on a main drugs smuggling route from Pakistan, Afghanistan and Iran to Europe, seized more than two tonnes of heroin last year.

Lebanese premier wins French prize

PARIS (AFP) — President Jacques Chirac awarded a prestigious French prize to Lebanese Premier Rafik Hariri on Monday for "exemplary" work in promoting his country's development. The Prix Louise Michel was bestowed on Mr. Hariri during a ceremony at Mr. Chirac's residence, the Elysee Palace, which was followed by a private lunch, the French presidential press service said. The prize was in recognition of "exemplary action for Lebanon's good, which shows in what Lebanon has achieved under your authority and your unstinting energy," said Mr. Chirac, who himself won the Prix Louise Michel in 1986.

Court bans Somali daily from N. Mogadishu

MOGADISHU (AFP) — The Islamic Sharia court has banned circulation and sale of the influential daily newspaper Qaran in areas under its control in north Mogadishu, accusing it of publishing false information. The court's order, broadcast by the north Mogadishu radio on Monday, said those found selling or smuggling Qaran into north Mogadishu would be punished according to Islamic law. The ban followed the publication by the newspaper of a plane crash at Isley airstrip in north Mogadishu which it attributed to a mine blast, but the report was later found to be false by reporters who rushed to the scene of the alleged accident. North Mogadishu is the stronghold of self-styled Somali interim President Ali Mahdi Mohammad's Somali Salvation Alliance (SSA), a bitter political opponent of the United Somali Congress/Somali National Alliance (USC/SNA) faction leader General Mohammed Farab Aidedo, who controls south Mogadishu.

Policeman, militant chief killed in Egypt

MINYA (AFP) — A policeman and a militant chief were killed in a shootout Monday in a central square of Mallawi town, a flashpoint of extremist violence in south Egypt, police said. Ahmad Hassan Al Sayed, 23, was shot dead when three members of the Gamaa Islamiyah extremist group opened fire on a group of policemen in the town, 280 kilometres south of Cairo in Minya province. Police returned fire as they pursued the fleeing militants through the town. The military head of the Gamaa in Mallawi, Ismail Abdullah Ismail, was shot dead in the chase, police said. Another militant was wounded but managed to escape with his colleague into nearby sugarcane fields, which police surrounded and began searching.

JORDAN TELEVISION	
Tel: 72111-19	
PROGRAMME TWO	
14:00	Captain Planet
14:30	Earth Star Voyager
15:15	Spirit of Adventure
16:00	The Adventures of the Black Stallion
16:30	Sky Trackers
17:00	Cost For Success
17:30	Seit — Fruit Et Legumes
18:00	Doc — Savoir Plus Santé
19:00	News in French
19:15	Magazine — Ushuaia
19:30	News Headlines
19:35	You Bet Your Life
20:00	The Secrets of the Treasure Island
20:25	The Bold and the Beautiful
21:15	True Blue
22:00	News in English
22:25	Fl Take Manhattan (P1 II)
23:15	Feature Film: "Memento"
PRAYER TIMES	
06:05	Fajr
06:25	Dhuhr
11:32	Asr
16:39	Maghrib
18:02	Isha
CHURCHES	
St. Mary of Nazareth Church, Sweith, Tel. 811741	
Assemblies of God Church, Tel. 632785	
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624540	
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 627441	
De la Salle Church Tel. 627567	
Terresanta Church Tel. 625332	
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 625411	
Anglican Church Tel. 625226	
Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 775261	
Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 775261	
St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751	
Armenian International Church Tel. 625226	
Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 824326	
German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 845457	
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints Tel. 845332	
Church of Nazareth Tel. 675691	
The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel. 811295	
WEATHER	
Bulkin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.	
Temperatures are expected to rise slightly with winds easterly moderate. In Aqaba, winds will be northerly moderate and vice calm.	
Min./Max. temp.	
Amman	2/14
Aqaba	8/21

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR	
EMERGENCIES	
Food Control Centre	637111
Civil Defence Department	661111
Civil Defence Emergency	620341
Rescue Police	192, 621111, 637777
Fire Brigade	617111
Blood Bank	775121
Highway Police	843402
Traffic Police	896300
Public Security Department	630231
Hotel Complaints	665800
Price Complaints	661176
Water and Sewerage	661176
Complaints	897467
Amman Municipality	767111
Telephone Information (directory assistance)	121
Overseas Calls	010230
Central Amman Telephone	767111
Repairs	623111
Abdul Telephonic Repairs	661111
Jordan Telecom	723111
Radar Jordan	774111
Water Authority	661111
Jordan Electricity Authority	815615
RJ Flight Information	18-53341
Queen Alia Int. Airport	18-53341
HOSPITALS	
AMMAN:	
Hussein Medical Centre	811813, 32
Khalidi Maternity, J. Amn	642316
Alkhalid Maternity, J. Amn	642412
Jabal Amman Maternity	642362
Mathis, J. Amman	634141
Palestine, Shamsi	607071
Shamsi Hospital	669131
University Hospital	845845
Al-Munasher Hospital	667227
The Islamic, Abdali	666127/37
Al-Ahli, Abdali	661646
Al-Bashir, J. Ashrafieh	775112/26
Army, Marka	891611/15
Queen Alia Hospital	666111
Amal Hospital	667155
The Arab Centre for Health and Special Surgery	665199
Jbn Sina Hospital	019186/72
Al Hikma Modern Hospital	019186/72
IRBID:	
Prince Basm Hospital	02127355
Greco Catholic Hospital	02127375
Jbn Al Nalees Hospital	02127101
AQABA:	
Prince Haya Hospital	03514111
FOR THE TRAVELLER	
QUEEN ALIA	
13:10	Frankfurt (YF)
14:20	Rome (AZ)
14:55	Munich, Aleppo (YF)
15:15	Dubai (EK)
15:30	Beirut (ME)
23:30	Aden (DY)
23:40	Amsterdam (KL)
00:55	Bucharest (RO)
01:10	London (KJ)
INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT	
This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. 019186/72, where it should always be verified.	
ARRIVALS	
Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)	
04:50	Jakarta, Kuala Lumpur (RJ)
07:30	Damascus (RJ)
08:00	Jeddah (add) (RJ)
08:00	Aqaba (RJ)
09:25	Abu Dhabi (RJ)
10:05	Muscat, Dubai (RJ)
10:05	Beirut (RJ)
10:15	Doha, Bahrain (RJ)
16:20	Cairo (RJ)
16:25	London (RJ)
16:45	Frankfurt (RJ)
17:15	Chicago, Amsterdam (RJ)
Other Flights (Terminal 2)	
13:10	Frankfurt (YF)
14:20	Rome (AZ)
14:55	Munich, Aleppo (YF)
15:15	Dubai (EK)
15:30	Beirut (ME)
23:30	Aden (DY)
23:40	Amsterdam (KL)
00:55	Bucharest (RO)
01:10	London (KJ)
HIJAZ RAILWAY TRAIN	
Dep. Amman 8:00 every Monday	
Arr. Damascus 5:00 p.m. every Monday	
Dep. Damascus 7:30 a.m. every Sunday	
Arr. Amman 5:00 p.m. every Sunday	
MARKET PRICES	
Upper/lower price in fbs per kg.	
Apple	765/500
Banana	640
Banana (Mukammal)	621
Banana (Imported)	850/650
Cabbage	110/750
Carrot	270/150
Cauliflower	250/170
Cucumbers (large)	210/120
Cucumbers (small)	230/120



His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan Monday addresses the opening session of the 1995 International Conference on Electronics, Circuits and Systems (Petra photo)

Prince Hassan calls for addressing problems of information poverty

AMMAN (Petra) — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan Monday said most countries of the world were at the receiving end of development witnessed in the field of electronics.

At the opening session of the 1995 International Conference on Electronics, Circuits and Systems, Prince Hassan said the bulk of developing nations have missed out on opportunities to participate in the development process in this important field.

"It would be an understatement for us to say that it is timely for us to host such a conference in Jordan and the Middle East," Prince Hassan said.

Prince Hassan said participants in the four-day conference, who represent 39 countries, should contribute to evaluating the level of social awareness and the importance of accessibility to information.

"It is not just a question of carrying new toys, some of which look like pieces of modern furniture, but it is a qualitative step towards enhancing the process of

accountability for decision-making at various levels of society. It is a process of increasing cultural interaction among society through trans-border data information flow, within the context of the global village, once again, that quality of internationalisation. We are, in associating ourselves and participating in the information age, contributing to global information transfer," he said.

The Crown Prince said there was uneven distribution of information resources between developed and developing countries, describing this as information poverty, which is manifested in phenomena such as planning without facts, unreliable information on economic and social issues and lack of decisive support information.

He said as a result the use of advanced technologies for better management to stimulate economic growth mainly resides in the foreseeable future in the developing world.

"The poverty line in Jordan is recognised by the

international community, and yet every few months a politician decides to re-adjust the benchmark for the poverty line, and I wonder how we can address the subject of global idiom, investment, economic interdependence with this arbitrary performance," the Crown Prince said.

The four-day conference is organised by the Higher Council of Science and Technology in cooperation with New York City University and City College.

Participants in the conference, numbering 300, will present 142 working papers dealing with the latest developments in computer sciences, information technology and artificial intelligence among a host of other related fields.

On the sidelines of the conference, 10 scientific workshops will be held at the National Data Centre, the Royal Scientific Society, the Jordan Electricity Authority and the Jordan Export Development and Commercial Centres Corporation.

Dead Sea developers say JVA leasing terms lacking incentives, burdensome

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Contracts for four major hotels on the Dead Sea will not be signed this month as originally planned after investors said this week that they will be asking for an extension to consider the terms of leasing being proposed by the Jordan Valley Authority.

The four hotels—initiatives of two Jordanian investment groups, two Jordanian investors and foreign hotel companies ACCOR and Marriott—are to be built on state land near the Dead Sea Spa Hotel, Jordan's only existing hotel along the Dead Sea shore.

Their total cost is estimated at \$280 million. Officials in late November said they expected the contracts to be signed before the close of last month, but investors, unhappy about the terms,

have not yet signed contracts and are hoping that the government will reconsider its terms.

"We are asking that the government give us until after the new year to make a decision," said Khalil Talhouni, head of Zara Investments, whose company is planning a tourist village on the northern shore of the Dead Sea.

Investors said they want to consult further with other investors and lenders after they found the terms of the proposed lease to be burdensome.

Among their main concerns are stipulations in the lease agreement that investors provide their own infrastructure, including water and electricity, and that rent is paid in advance in five-year installments for the 30-year leasing period, and that the agreement does not allow for a grace period during which to design and

build. Ziad Salah, representing the French hotel group ACCOR, which is planning to build hotels at the Dead Sea, Aqaba, Petra and Amman, said that these terms are unacceptable to the group of investors since the government, as a minimum incentive to private investors, should provide the necessary infrastructure.

"These terms are just not feasible for us," he said. "When a (hotel) room is occupied, it requires two cubic metres of water—can you tell me from where and how are we going to bring that water, among other things?"

Also, he said, it is standard that lessors give a grace period once the lessee comes into possession of the land, for designing and building, while he also criticised the leasing period as being too short.

"In a hotel, you don't even start to make money until after at least 20 years," he added, pointing out that in Israel, the length of lease is usually at least 50 years.

The four hotels at the Dead Sea would add some 1,600 rooms to the area (and would employ some 5,000-6,000 people according to Mr. Salah), but the rooms are still fewer than the 2,000 that already exist in Israel—which is already planning for major expansion. Under terms such as these, investors are concerned that they will not be able to compete.

"If we are talking about tourism development seriously," said Mr. Talhouni, "the government should look at changing some of these ideas. We would like to show (the government) what sort of incentives are being offered to our (Israeli) neighbours," Mr. Talhouni added.

The Israeli government gives a subsidy to private investors at 28 per cent of the cost of the hotel, Mr. Salah said, in addition to providing infrastructure, which is usually a given.

"The government in Israel gives assistance," Mr. Salah said. "Here, we are starting with negatives."

The four intend to submit an official request to extend the period in which they consider the terms of the lease, and Mr. Talhouni said he is optimistic that the government would reconsider its terms as well.

"We've yet to propose anything (to the government)," he said, "but it's my feeling that they are prepared to discuss and negotiate."

A source at the department of the Jordan Valley Authority overseeing the development of the area would not comment on the issue.

Swiss team to donate technical training aid

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Vocational Training Corporation (VTC) and a Swiss contact team Monday signed the minutes of their meetings over the past two weeks covering talks on Swiss technical aid to Jordan's vocational training centres.

The signing of the minutes followed visits to vocational training centres in Irbid, Mashare, Hakama, Aqaba and Sahab by a team from the Swiss group to study their needs of equipment to be purchased through a JD 1.06 million Swiss donation to Jordan.

The equipment will serve trades such as electricity, auto repair, welding, carpentry, air-conditioning, refrigeration and metal-casting, Mr. Nasrallah told the Jordan Times. The team of experts had conducted a survey of these centres and had studied instructor

needs for various trades, said Ali Nasrallah, VTC director general who signed the minutes with Swiss ambassador Gian Federico Bedotti.

The minutes provide for steps to be taken in the process of purchasing the equipment which will take place within five months, Mr. Nasrallah said.

Modern equipment will modernise training methods, enabling the VTC to provide training required for the labour market, Mr. Nasrallah said. He added that the VTC is currently undertaking a comprehensive revision of its training programmes following a Council of Ministers' decision to this effect.

The VTC's revision includes classifying various trades and setting job descriptions, he said.

Coffee prices down by 30%

Reduction is still below expectations, says Dr. Obeidat

By Francesca Ciriaci
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — According to a press statement issued by the Ministry of Supply, coffee prices will see a 30 per cent reduction, going down from JD 4.5 to JD 3.5 per kilogramme.

The reduction, which came as the result of a meeting between the ministry secretary general, ministry officials and a delegation representing coffee traders held Monday morning, is below the expectations of the National Society for Consumer Protection (NSCP), which was urging a lower price ceiling.

According to Ahmad Diban, director of the information and public relations office at the Ministry of Supply, the decision will be enforced starting today and will affect the "Rupesta" and "Brazilla" beans, the two most widely consumed qualities of coffee.

Mr. Diban told the Jordan Times that other qualities, such as "Extra" and "Special", were not included in the agreement and their prices will follow market prices.

The agreement follows intense contacts and preliminary meetings held by the ministry over the past few weeks to urge the importers to lower the coffee prices in

accordance with the significant reduction in the international market, according to the statement.

In an interview with the Jordan Times earlier this week, Mohammed Obeidat, president of the NSCP, said that coffee prices should have been lowered eight months ago, when they decreased worldwide, and that, according to studies conducted on the international market, they should not exceed JD 3.

Dr. Obeidat also said that, in case the Ministry of Supply had failed to impose such a price ceiling, the NSCP would have called for a national, one-week boycott against coffee.

Ahmad Nisbah, deputy president of the NSCP, told the Jordan Times that "the NSCP" is not satisfied with the prices agreed to between coffee merchants and the Ministry of Supply, and that "the campaign for the boycott will continue until there is a positive response by coffee-merchants."

Mr. Nisbah added that the NSCP is going to call for a press conference on Thursday. According to a study conducted by the NSCP who questioned 3,000 Jordanian housewives, 85.6 per cent of them agreed to the boycott on coffee and accepted to stop consuming the popular drink for one week.

Anti-nuclear activist arrives in Amman with message of support for King

AMMAN (J.T.) — Ulrich Gottstein, a member of the Board of Directors of International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War (IPPNW), arrived in Amman Monday to present a letter of gratitude to His Majesty King Hussein for his efforts and support of nuclear disarmament.

Dr. Gottstein, a professor of medicine in Germany, told the Jordan Times that "among those who supported the ideas of IPPNW was King Hussein... [who] always supported the idea of nuclear weapon-free zones, especially in the

Middle East."

The IPPNW, a recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize in 1985, is a non-partisan organisation which aims to educate people as well as politicians about the dangers of nuclear weapons.

The organisation has 200,000 member physicians worldwide, of which 146 are Jordanian. Egypt, Palestine, and Israel are also members. The IPPNW adheres to the principles of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, which was ratified in 1970.

Amman to host Arab-African parliamentary conference

AMMAN (Petra) — Speaker of the Lower House of Parliament Sa'ed Hayel Srour met with Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shakir Monday to discuss arrangements for next month's eighth Arab-African parliamentary conference in Amman.

The prime minister underlined the importance of this conference, saying it should strengthen Arab-African parliamentary ties, Mr. Srour said.

The two-day meeting, which starts on Jan. 8, is an opportunity to promote bilateral cooperation and dialogue for the benefit of

Arab and African countries, Mr. Srour said.

Mr. Srour, who will chair the conference, said invitations have been sent out to Arab and African countries, the Arab League, the Organisation of African States and the Inter-Parliamentary Union.

The agenda of the conference will cover the role of Arab and African parliaments in helping defuse existing disputes between African and Arab nations, Afro-Arab cooperation in a Middle East and Africa nuclear free zone, and the liberation of trade between Arab and African nations.

PSD celebrates Arab police day

Royal Decree promotes senior officers

AMMAN (Petra) — A Royal Decree was Monday issued approving the promotion of several senior Public Security Department (PSD) officers.

The decree approved the promotion of Brigadier Abdul Karim Tarawneh, Brigadier Abdul Hameed Irshaid and Brigadier Adel Armouti to the rank of major-general.

PSD Director Lieutenant-General Abdul Rahman Al Adwan decorated the officers with their new ranks at a special ceremony at his office Monday morning.

The ceremony, which coincided with the PSD's celebrations of the Arab Police Day, was attended by Commander of the Badia and Border Guard Force Major-General Fawaz Ben Zaben and senior PSD officers.

Later Monday, Lt.-Gen. Adwan attended the PSD's celebration of the

Arab Police Day held at the PSD Officers' Club.

At the celebration, several retired PSD personnel and families of policemen killed on duty were honoured in appreciation of their outstanding efforts in serving the department and national security.

Retired Major-General Faleh Gharaibeh delivered an address on behalf of the PSD's ex-servicemen, and paid tribute to the role of the department in preserving security and stability.

PSD Deputy Director for Traffic Affairs Major General Ibrahim Saraih delivered another address in which he voiced pride in the role of the PSD at the national and international levels, highlighting the role of the department in peace-keeping operations in various parts of the world.

He said the PSD's responsibilities expanded in the peace era when the number of tourists visiting

the Kingdom increased tangibly.

"This added to the burdens shouldered by the PSD which had to create new departments and sections such as the tourist police force and the force operating at crossing points between Jordan and Israel.

He added that other crimes emerged as the Kingdom embarked on the democratisation process, saying some people abuse democracy and the freedom of expression.

"Some ill-minded people abused the freedom of expression, believing it means the freedom to slander and defamation," he said.

On the sidelines of the celebration, which included several poetry recitals, Lt.-Gen. Adwan opened a new gymnasium at the officers' club.

WHAT'S ON

. FILM

* "Lissy" (in German with subtitles in English) at the Goethe-Institute at 8.00 p.m.

. BAZAAR

* Bazaar at the Greek Orthodox Church in the Ruwag Neighbourhood, Fuheis. (until Dec. 22)

. POETRY RECITAL

* Recital of poems by Dr. Mahmoud Shalabi at the Phoenix Gallery, Gardens St., at 6.00 p.m.

. CHRISTMAS SALE

* Gifts (publications by the Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature, hand-painted Christmas cards, hand-crafted silver jewellery, recycled glass, pottery) at Beit Al Fuheis Hall, Fuheis (until Dec. 22).

* Gifts and crafts by Suha Lallas Kassisieh (includes Christmas items, table mats, baskets, wall-hangings, candle-holders and side-lamps) at the Jordan Design and Trade Centre of the Noor Al Hussein Foundation, off Wadi Saqra Street (until Dec. 31).

Oil company receives 50-year prospecting concession

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources Monday awarded the National Oil Company (NOC) a 50-year concession to prospect for oil and natural gas in the Kingdom.

Minister of Energy and Mineral Resources Samih Darwazah, who signed the deal with the NOC's board chairman Rajab Sa'ad, said the concession allows the company to conduct seismological and geophysical as well as aerial surveys in the course of its exploration.

Speaking following the signing ceremony held at the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources, Mr. Darwazah said the renewable deal allows for the exploration of oil and gas in a specific region located in north-east and east of the Kingdom.

Mr. Darwazah added that extracted oil will be marketed on commercial basis. According to the minister, the company will drill wells, set up storage facilities for oil and appropriate land for use by the company.

He said the company and the Jordanian government will share the returns of oil or gas sales. Mr. Darwazah also said the NOC will submit a bi-annual report to the ministry of energy and mineral resources on its activities and plans.

The NOC, which came into being in July this year with a JD 20 million capital, will conduct operations at the Rishbeh district to produce more gas mainly for use in electric power generation, according to the minister.

Meanwhile, the Ministry of Energy said Monday a team representing the American oil company, Anadarko, has arrived in Amman for talks at the Natural Resources Authority on oil and gas prospecting in Jordan.

Mr. Darwazah said several American firms have already expressed willingness to sign profit-sharing agreements for oil prospecting with Jordan. He said Anadarko has tentatively agreed to invest \$20 million in its operations.

SSC director outlines corporation services

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Social Security Corporation (SSC) which established in 1980, has to date provided services and benefits to citizens employed by a total of 10,330 firms and organisations in Jordan, according to Safwan Touqan, the corporation's director general.

Dr. Touqan was addressing the chairman and members of the Legal Committee of the Lower House of Parliament to whom he outlined SSC services and achievements over the past 16 years.

The total number of citizens benefiting from SSC services was 789,876 of whom 73.8 per cent are Jordanians according to Dr. Touqan. He added that the services covered compensation to beneficiaries for death and occupational injuries and pension benefits to senior citizens.

Dr. Touqan said the corporation's investments are in banks, real estate, hotels, tourist installations, housing projects and others, which yielded JD 80.6 million in profits between Sept. of last year and Sept. 1995.

The SSC is conducting studies to widen its services and increase its operations, he said.

At the outset of the meeting, Labour Minister Nader Abul Sha'er noted that the SSC and the Ministry of Labour were finalising arrangements for increasing the pension of beneficiaries as of 1996.

The Council of Ministers last month decided that retired citizens covered by the SSC can expect a 10 per cent increase in their pensions next year.

The measure benefits already retired personnel and all future pensioners, and means that the SSC will incur an additional cost of JD 10 million annually.

The minister noted that the amendment to the SSC law to cater to the 10 per cent increase has been referred to the Legal Committee for endorsement before it becomes law, saying the SSC corporation has set up a special committee to receive suggestions and ideas for further amending the SSC law.

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Gingrich chosen Time's 1995 Man of the Year

NEW YORK (AFP) — Newt Gingrich, the fiery and controversial speaker of the Republican-led House of Representatives, has been chosen 1995's Man of the Year by Time magazine.

Widely credited with engineering the 1994 electoral coup that saw the Republicans retake the House from the Democrats for the first time in 40 years, Mr. Gingrich has "changed the language and substance of American politics," Time said.

Despised by the Democrats he defeated, Mr. Gingrich finds himself on the cover of Time at a bitter-sweet moment.

Just as the Republican goal of a balanced budget within seven years is within reach, the speaker has recently become the subject of a tax-fraud investigation, and his approval ratings are below 30 per cent according to some polls.

Mr. Gingrich has denied any wrongdoing, but Democrats are hoping a special prosecutor designat-

ed earlier this month by the House Ethics Committee will look beyond accusations that he allegedly misused tax-free contributions to fund a college course he taught in his southern state of Georgia.

It would be no small irony if the charges bring him down. After all, it was Mr. Gingrich who brought down Democratic House Speaker Jim Wright in a cloud of ethical controversy in 1989 — the first speaker in U.S. history to resign.

As Time cautions, however, Mr. Gingrich, 52, has managed to pull off several rebirths in a career that began 20 years ago.

Only on the third try did he win his Georgia congressional seat in 1978, and his successful campaign against a tax hike supported by President George Bush in 1990 nearly cost him his incumbency.

Charismatic, colourful and nearly always controversial, Mr. Gingrich was the brainchild behind the so-called Contract With

America — the 100-day Republican agenda calling for a dramatic scale-back of the federal bureaucracy created largely by Democratic presidents Franklin Roosevelt and Lyndon Johnson.

He crafted the plan even though few political analysts predicted the House would go Republican in 1994, and his convictions earned him the respect and loyalty of the troops in the "Republican revolution" he led.

Proned to speak in superlative terms laden with references to the information age, Mr. Gingrich once said all poor people should be given a laptop computer.

More recently, he not-so-subtly suggested that he allowed the government to partially shut down in a budget fight with the White House because President Bill Clinton made him sit on the back of Air Force One on a flight to attend the funeral of slain Israeli leader Yitzhak Rabin.

But above all, Mr. Gingrich — who recently

ended speculation about a possible presidential run — has become the central ideological power in the U.S. Congress, and has done more to shape the raging debate about the role of the federal government than any other leader.

"Gingrich is our 1995 Man of the Year because his rise and partial fall were emblematic of an historic shift in Washington that will be felt for generations to come," Time said in a statement released Sunday, a day before his special year-end issue hits newsstands.

"For better or worse, he has changed the language and substance of American politics," said the magazine's Managing Editor James Gaines. "Perhaps like no other politician in recent history."

For at least a generation, Time predicted, no president is likely to propose spending more than the government earns, or expanding what it attempts to do.

Indonesia-Australia sign security pact

JAKARTA (R) — Indonesia signed a historic security agreement with Australia Monday, which both sides see easing mutual suspicion while boosting military cooperation between the large but diverse neighbours.

Indonesian Foreign Minister Ali Alatas and his Australian counterpart Gareth Evans signed the pact in the presence of President Suharto and Australian Prime Minister Paul Keating.

"This is a statement which makes clear what our strategic intentions are towards one another," Mr. Keating said. "It must do a lot to reduce suspicions in both countries of both countries," he told a news conference.

The agreement follows decades of unease between two countries whose troops clashed in the jungles of Borneo in the early 1960s.

Indonesian State Secretary Mardiono told reporters Mr. Suharto had told Mr. Keating he hoped the agreement would eliminate doubt in Australia about Jakarta's intentions.

"If it cannot be abolished, it is expected this agreement can reduce the doubt," Mr. Mardiono quoted Mr. Suharto as saying.

Mr. Mardiono quoted Mr.

Suharto as saying the agreement was important for security and stability in the region as well as for the economic development and prosperity of both countries.

"What it does is give full expression to the kind of relationship I believe we should have always had with Indonesia and it is a declaration of trust and cooperation on both our parts," Mr. Keating told reporters.

Mr. Keating, on his fifth visit to Indonesia since becoming prime minister in 1991, was in Jakarta with a high-powered delegation, including Deputy Prime Minister Kim Beazley, Defence Minister Robert Ray and armed forces chief General John Baker.

The agreement commits the two countries to consult regularly on common security and challenges, as well as to promote security cooperation.

The two diverse but strong neighbours control land masses among the biggest in the Asia-Pacific region.

Mainly-Muslim Indonesia, the world's fourth most populous nation with about 193 million people, has been ruled with a firm hand by retired General Suharto since the late 1960s.

Australia, a member of

the Commonwealth, has about 18 million people.

Both nations said the agreement would boost already growing defence ties between the nations' armed forces.

"It is essentially a green light to defence forces that more can be done," Mr. Keating said.

Indonesian paratroopers took part in Australia's annual multinational war games for the first time this year, despite protests from groups supporting East Timor independence.

Last week's announcement would be signed Monday after 18 months of secret negotiations received applause and condemnation in Australia.

East Timorese activists in Australia condemned it as a sellout but some analysts said it was a sign of maturing relations.

"If it had been a more public process, there probably would not have been a treaty," Mr. Keating said.

Indonesia invaded East Timor, 480 kilometres from Australia, in 1975 and annexed it in the following year.

Among Western nations, only Australia recognises its sovereignty over the troubled former Portuguese colony.

Arms body holds crucial talks with Sinn Fein

DUBLIN (R) — An international panel aiming to boost a fragile Northern Ireland peace through guerrilla disarmament held crucial talks Monday with Sinn Fein, the political arm of the IRA.

The Irish Republican Army (IRA), which balled a war against British rule 16 months ago, refuses to comply with London's demand that its weapons be scrapped to secure a place for Sinn Fein at all-party talks.

Pro-British Protestant guerrillas, operating as a matching truce, also rule out an arms bandover.

Sinn Fein said before meeting members of the U.S.-backed disarmament panel at Dublin Castle that any moves to "decommission" arms must include the weaponry of British forces and their Protestant "Unionist" supporters.

Gerry Adams, Sinn Fein president, demanding Britain drop its arms-before-talks condition, said: "All of the weapons in the situation must be taken out of it...We need, all of us, to come together to talk about the future."

"Guns have been silenced. We need to use that opportunity to...bring about democratisation and to talk about the amount of constitutional and political change which is required to underpin these cessations."

Britain and Ireland established the so-called "international body", headed by former U.S. Senator George Mitchell, after a months-long stalemate on the arms question threatened to derail the peace secured by guerrilla truces.

British ministers insist IRA disarmament is vital to reassure the Protestant majority in Northern Ireland that a bloody campaign on their "union" with Britain is finally over.

Sinn Fein says Britain introduced the precondition after the IRA called off its 25-year war to oust British forces in September 1994, to humiliate the guerrillas and woo vital votes from Protestant legislators in the British parliament.

"No-one really expects the British to decommission their weapons but we would expect them to take their armed forces back into their own country," Mr. Adams told Irish Radio.



Austrian Chancellor Franz Vranitzky raises his arms in jubilation in his Social Democratic Party's headquarters in Vienna after winning 38.32 per cent of the vote in the general elections (AFP photo)

Austrian leaders mull future after elections; right licks wounds

VIENNA (R) — Austrian leaders met their top party officials Monday to reflect on the results of Sunday's snap general election and to map out strategy ahead of talks to form a new coalition government.

Chancellor Franz Vranitzky, whose Social Democrats won their best election result since 1990 with 38.3 per cent of the vote, said before meeting his party chiefs that voters had clearly rejected a sharp swing to the right.

"The results of the general election Sunday indicated a clear 'no' by the Austrian people to co-operation between the (conservative) People's Party (OVP) and the (far-right) Freedom Party," Mr. Vranitzky told Austria Radio International.

Joerg Haider's anti-immigration Freedom Party lost around 1,300 votes nationwide and one seat in parliament, reducing his total of deputies to 41 in the 183-member parliament.

The result was a blow to the party which had campaigned hard on a law and order platform, blaming illegal immigrants for a rise in Austria's crime rate. It was the first electoral defeat for Mr. Haider since he took

control of the party in 1986.

Mr. Haider, glossing over the slip in support, said the outcome of the election was proof that his former success was not based on a protest vote.

Mr. Vranitzky, barely able to conceal his glee at halting a 16-year erosion of support for the left, said the election showed voters had backed a gentler approach to cutting Austria's huge budget deficit.

But traders took a different view, seeing increased backing for the Social Democrats as negative for the markets. Austria's ATX index of 20 blue chip stocks fell below 940 points at 1000 GMT for the first time this month.

The coalition with the OVP, led by Foreign Minister Wolfgang Schuessel, collapsed in October when the two parties failed to bridge their differences on how to pare down the deficit, estimated to be running at 120 billion schillings (\$12 billion) in 1995.

Mr. Schuessel, disappointed by his 38.1 per cent election tally, was accused by the left of bringing down the government for his own personal ambition and lust

for power as chancellor.

The two parties were likely to agree to forge a new grand coalition after the outgoing government tenders its resignation to President Thomas Klestil Tuesday.

Besides agreeing on a new government, the leaders faced the much harder task of settling a budget for 1996 and finding common ground to reduce the deficit — a task they failed to achieve during six weeks of talks up to Oct. 12.

The prospect of budget negotiations dragging on until the end of January unsettled investors.

"A Socialist victory has never been good for the markets," one bond trader said. "Because of this result, a lot of things have become much, much more difficult than people imagined."

Some traders warned a weakened conservative party could make cutting the deficit more problematic and put membership in a future European Currency Union at risk.

"The coming weeks will be decisive and the market will be watching for every headline," said Roman Eisenschek, a trader with Deutsche Bank in Vienna.

Vicar apologises for denying existence Santa

LONDON (AFP) — A vicar was obliged to apologise to his congregation Sunday for denying the existence of Father Christmas and the Tooth Fairy, the Daily Telegraph reported Monday. Reverend Brian Edwards of the Anglican Church of Saint Lawrence at Abbots Langley, just north of London, had caused children among his flock to burst into tears when he said in a sermon the previous week that it was their parents who filled their stockings on Christmas Eve. A number of parents complained as a result. Rev. Edwards said that he had been trying to explain to the children that the birth of Jesus Christ was not a fairy tale, unlike the story of Father Christmas, the Telegraph said.

Michael Jackson recuperates at Disneyland Paris

PARIS (AFP) — Rock star Michael Jackson has been resting on doctors' orders at Disneyland Paris after gastro-enteritis kept him in hospital for six days, park managers here said Monday. Jackson, 37, arrived in Paris from New York on Concorde late Saturday and, accompanied by nephews and security personnel, took the presidential "Sleeping Beauty" suite. He visited the huge park with his entourage Sunday, waving to fans from his hotel balcony. Park staff said he wanted to return to the attractions Monday. It is the fifth time he has visited Disneyland Paris but the first at this time of year. It was not clear how long he would be staying. Jackson left hospital on Dec. 12 after a bout of gastro-enteritis. He was admitted six days earlier after fainting during rehearsals for a televised special.

Rare parrots' squawking alerts Italian customs

ROME (R) — Italian customs officials Saturday seized 32 rare parrots at Rome airport after they heard squawking from luggage belonging to two Nigerian women. Officials swooped as the women, who had arrived from Lagos, waited for a flight to Bombay with their luggage full of red and grey Psittacus Eritacus parrots, worth about \$10,000 each.

Surgeons cut 45 kg of fat and skin from Man

Los Angeles (R) — A Los Angeles man who recently lost 400 pounds (180 kg) underwent surgery Friday to have another 100 pounds (45 kg) of excess skin and fat cut from his body. Tommy McGruder was placed under anaesthetic at Chapman Medical Centre in the Los Angeles suburb of Orange for an operation that doctors expected to last late into the night. The roughly 12 sq ft (1.1 sq metres) of flesh and fat will be donated to a Pennsylvania research facility, where scientists will use the tissue to test experimental drugs for heart disease and motion sickness. Hospital spokeswoman Trish Bartel said the procedure was going smoothly. She said doctors planned to start on Mr. McGruder's legs, then move to the stomach. Ms. Bartel said Mr. McGruder would be kept in the hospital's intensive care unit, wrapped in bandages, until Sunday. He is scheduled for release Monday. Mr. McGruder, who has been bedridden by his obesity for nearly three years, dropped from 800 to 400 pounds (360 to 180 kg) over the last five months. But the giant folds of drooping skin that resulted have made it difficult for him to move and have presented a health hazard because they attract bacteria.

Russians hail election as a success for democracy

MOSCOW (R) — The results may have trickled in even more slowly than many had hoped, but Russia's second parliamentary election since the collapse of the Soviet Union was hailed Monday as a success for democracy.

Clashes erupted in Chechnya and many residents of the rebel southern region dismissed voting there as part of Sunday's election as a sham.

But any fears of violence elsewhere in the vast country of almost 150 million proved unfounded, election monitors produced no early evidence of major fraud and a rare peaceful handover from one legislature to the next looked in the offing.

"It is a very good thing simply that this election took place and was valid. There were some doubts that it would be cancelled or postponed," political commentator Leonid Radzhikhovskiy said in a television interview.

"But this is a civilised process, after all, and I think that our citizens have acquired the reflex that elections are more convenient than a fight and sorting things out with mandates is more productive, cheaper and brings less bloodshed than doing it

with bricks, bayonets and bottles."

He said it was only the second time a Russian parliament had served its time and handed over power peacefully.

This indicated that he considered the last election in December 1993 a peaceful handover, even though President Boris Yeltsin had used tanks to crush a revolt by parliamentary hardliners three months before the vote.

Initial comments by foreign election observers suggested there had been no major problems. Despite the murders of two election hopefuls during campaigning, Sunday's election also passed without violence outside Chechnya — where separatist rebels fighting a one-year-old war for independence battled Russian troops.

"It is a question of the democratic field broadening and that is good," Leonid Gosman, a psychologist and political commentator, said.

"Even those citizens who voted for those parties and movements whose ideology and mentality are not inclined towards democracy and elections agree that power can and must change, not through coups and shooting, but by elections."

Mr. Yeltsin had appealed to the nation Friday to turn out in large numbers to prevent a return to the hardline past just four years after the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991.

But even the prospect of big Communist gains in the State Duma (lower house) did not seem to shock or upset his aides.

Two of his aides, Mark Urnov and political adviser Georgy Satarov, welcomed the relatively high turnout and took early signs of Communist gains in their stride.

"This high turnout shows people value elections and democracy," said Mr. Urnov, head of the Presidential Analytical Centre, although he had hoped the turnout would reach 60 per cent. It appeared to be slightly lower, at about 56 per cent.

Judgments and predictions of the results were hard to make even by dawn in Moscow, more than nine hours after the last polling stations had closed. The Central Electoral Commission fell far behind its own schedule for announcing results.

Keating commission to target rogue states in anti-nuclear campaign

SYDNEY (AFP) — Australia will target rogue states and terrorist groups in its campaign for a global ban on nuclear weapons, Australia's ambassador to the United Nations, Richard Butler, said Monday.

Mr. Butler, who will head a high-profile Australian commission aimed at ridding the world of nuclear weapons, told reporters in Canberra it was crucial to convince nuclear states that their security would be maintained without nuclear weapons.

"That leads, naturally, to rogue states, because it would be a bitter irony indeed if those who had these weapons got rid of them in the name of humanity, only to find that they were then threatened by rogue states or terrorist groups who had in a clandestine way acquired nuclear weapons or even nuclear briefcase-type capabilities," he said.

"That's not a fantasy. It

can happen," he said.

The Canberra Commission, launched by Prime Minister Paul Keating last month amid continuing global protest at France's decision to resume its South Pacific nuclear test programme, will hold its first meeting between Jan. 23 and 25.

Among its 15 members will be former French Prime Minister Michel Rocard and former U.S. Defence Secretary Robert McNamara.

Among its major objectives will be new international legislation halting the production of weapons-grade fissile material, Mr. Butler said.

A central part of the commission's report "will be rogue states, terrorist groups, extra-systemic acquisition of nuclear explosive capability."

"It would be folly to ask anyone to give up what they thought was important for their security only to face something like this."

"We will need a major piece of international law which brings to an end the production of weapons-grade fissile material, plutonium in particular, but to some extent enriched uranium that forms the core of these weapons," he said.

It would also try to find a means of ensuring to all in the world that the material was not being produced below the ground.

"We haven't got a snowball's chance in hell of stopping them if we don't set our mind to it and get international agreement to implement it, and I believe we can."

Mr. Butler said the commission had received widespread support from around the world including France, which resumed nuclear testing in the South Pacific earlier this year.

Most of the response had come from Europe and North America as well as the South Pacific nations,



Russian soldiers fix hand-grenades along the road to the town of Urus-Martan, in Chechnya, where some fighting between Russian army and Chechen separatist fighters were reported (AFP photo)

Russians and Chechens battle for fifth day

MOSCOW (R) — Russian forces battled Chechen rebels in the region's second city, Gudermes, Monday in a fifth day of fighting linked to Russia's parliamentary election, Interfax News Agency said.

Russian troops stranded in the buildings of a military headquarters and a railway station in Gudermes were surrounded by the rebels and again under heavy fire, Interfax said, quoting the Russian military command in Chechnya.

Interfax said that in the last 24 hours three Russian soldiers had been wounded in 29 rebel attacks on Russian positions. Most of the attacks were in the capital Grozny.

A military spokesman also told Interfax a group of 100 rebels had tried to break through Russian positions near the village of Urus-

Martan Sunday night. Some of them had been killed during 50 minutes of heavy fighting, he said without mentioning Russian casualties. There was no independent word from Chechnya on the latest fighting.

Rebels opposing Russian efforts to stage local elections and the national parliamentary vote in Chechnya infiltrated Gudermes Thursday. Interior Minister Anatoly Kulikov has said 32 soldiers were killed and 41 wounded Thursday in Gudermes, but other reports suggested heavier Russian losses.

The city, 30 kilometers east of Grozny, is sealed off by Russian troops and reporters are barred from approaching it.

On Sunday, Russian officials claimed a big election victory for their preferred

candidate to head Chechnya but journalists in the region cast doubt on the way the vote was staged.

Moscow killed the vote as the only alternative to more bloodshed but their early start Thursday brought a flare-up in fighting which critics say can only get worse.

President Boris Yeltsin's Chief of Staff Sergei Filatov told ITAR-TASS news agency Doku Zavgayev had won 85 to 90 per cent of the vote for regional leader. Official turnout figures ranged from 50 to 70 per cent, although journalists on the ground saw little evidence of voting.

In Grozny, fires, bomb attacks and intimidation by rebels meant many polling stations had not even opened. The main polling station in Grozny was not busy.

Residents complained that voter lists drawn up by the Moscow-backed authorities missed out huge chunks of the electorate. Officials handed out sheaves of ballot papers, lured people with meat and went around door to door to collect votes.

Mr. Zavgayev's main competitors had pulled out of the poll saying it was a fraud and international observers and peace brokers from the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe stayed away.

Mr. Filatov said Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin's Our Home Is Russia party was leading the race for the region's parliamentary seat with about 50 per cent. Our Home was credited with 9.5 per cent of the nationwide vote in early results.

New S. Korean premier urges break from past

SEOUL (R) — South Korea's new prime minister took office Monday with a call for reform in order to "put history to rights" and to root out the legacy of corruption under military-backed rule.

Speaking to a gathering of government officials after parliament approved his appointment by an overwhelming majority, legal scholar Lee Soo-Sung urged support for his mission to banish a discredited system. "Putting history to rights is a starting point towards correcting our mistaken path and opening up a new era in which justice and love flow like a river," Mr. Lee said.

The appointment of Mr. Lee, president of Seoul National University, marked the first step in an effort by beleaguered President Kim Young-Sam to distance his administration from a corruption scandal that has engulfed two of his predecessors.

Mr. Lee took office hours after disgraced former President Roh Tae-Won appeared in court with eight business moguls and six others to face charges of accepting \$369 million in bribes during Mr. Roh's tenure.

Mr. Roh's predecessor Chun Doo Hwan is also in detention and is expected to be charged with corruption and with masterminding a 1979 coup that led to an army massacre of pro-democracy demonstrators in the city of Kwangju.

By selecting Mr. Lee, a respected legal scholar from South Korea's most distinguished university, Mr. Kim was seen as promoting the rule of law in a country where business and political elites have traditionally acted in sleazy collusion.

But South Korean analysts were skeptical whether Mr. Kim could solve his problems by naming a political novice as prime minister, a largely figurehead post

under the country's presidential system.

They dismissed cabinet reshuffles as Mr. Kim's reflexive response to political trouble.

"This is Kim Young-Sam's fifth prime minister," said a Western diplomat. "He's getting careless."

In separate comments reported by local media, Mr. Lee suggested he did not expect to last long.

"I don't have plans to serve as premier for long, nor do I have prospects of staying there for long," Yonhap News Agency quoted the incoming prime minister as telling a gathering of university administrators Monday.

On Sunday Mr. Lee met Mr. Kim and urged him to make a thorough housecleaning to curb the influence of conservatives who served under Mr. Chun and Mr. Roh, Yonhap said.

He told Mr. Kim to fill the 21-member cabinet with "young, fresh and reform-

minded people" and urged the president to toss out ministers who disagreed with his policies, the agency reported.

In his speech Monday Mr. Lee called on the government to "go beyond merely settling accounts with individual persons and boldly reform bad systems and practices."

Local media have reported that outgoing Prime Minister Lee Hong-Koo was replaced to enable him to stand as a star candidate for the ruling party in general elections next April.

Political analysts said this indicated that the reshuffle was as much political manoeuvring as housecleaning.

Lee Hong-Koo will reportedly be deployed to mend political fences in the southeastern city of Taegu, home base of Mr. Chun and Mr. Roh, where voters are angered by Mr. Kim's rough handling of the regions' most famous sons.

Poll: Canadians snowed under by pessimism

TORONTO (AFP) — Canadians are more pessimistic than ever about their future, according to a survey by the newsweekly MacLean's and CBC Television released Sunday.

One Canadian in three polled said the country would not exist in its current confederate form in 2000, but the figure was 50 per cent for residents of the mostly French-speaking province of Quebec.

Among Quebecers surveyed, 60 per cent said that if a new vote on independence for the province were held within the next five years, Quebec would break

away from Canada.

Pro-sovereignty (independence) forces lost a referendum on separating from Canada on Oct. 30 by a razor-thin margin of less than one per cent.

The survey of 1,610 Canadians Nov. 9-15 by strategic counsel found there was a yawning gap between Quebecers and all other Canadians on Quebec's demand for the right to veto future constitutional reforms.

While 68 per cent of Quebecers said they believed the step should be approved, only 18 per cent of Canadians outside

Quebec saw the idea — viewed by many as possibly crucial to keeping Quebec in Canada — as necessary.

About 66 per cent of those polled believed the federal government should put the debate on Canadian unity on hold for a while, but more than 70 per cent said constitutional changes still would be necessary to show Quebec that federalism could evolve.

One third of Canadians said they feared their living standards would decline in the coming years, and more than half said conditions for senior citizens would become increasingly diffi-

cult.

Canadians were even more pessimistic about the outlook as far as taxes were concerned, with 70 per cent discouraged and the likely slashing or elimination of social programmes, something 89 per cent of Canadians polled saw on the horizon.

The future in the bedroom also appeared gloomy, the poll found. Fully 29 per cent of Canadians said they were scarcely or not at all sexually active.

Half said they were somewhat active and 10 per cent described themselves as very active.

9 suspected Khmer Rouge charged in terrorist plot

PHNOM PENH (AFP) — Nine suspected Khmer Rouge terrorists Monday were formally charged with criminal conspiracy and membership in the outlawed guerrilla group, police and court sources said.

The nine, including one woman, were allegedly planning to destabilise the government and create instability by throwing grenades at political party offices and foreign embassies, they said.

"They have been charged with organising crimes against the royal government of Cambodia and also (under) the Khmer Rouge law," said an official at Phnom Penh Municipal Court.

"They are being charged as being members of the Khmer Rouge," the official said.

Authorities confiscated five grenades and a large number

of anti-government leaflets, police said, adding that the leaflets called for soldiers to defect to the Khmer Rouge.

Seven of the suspects were arrested last Tuesday and Wednesday and two of them were arrested Saturday, police said.

"They would have committed sabotage and created political turmoil if they had succeeded in their operation," a senior Interior Ministry official said after the first arrests last week.

A conviction under the anti-Khmer Rouge law carries a penalty of one to five years in prison while a conviction for criminal conspiracy brings a penalty of three to 15 years in prison.

Sri Lanka stops wages to lure back Jaffna refugees

VAVUNIYA, Sri Lanka (R)

— Sri Lankan authorities have stopped the pay of state employees in the north of the island in a bid to force refugees, caught in a tug of war between the government and Tamil guerrillas, to return home.

"The authorities have asked the government agent in Jaffna to stop all payments to government servants like pensioners," an official said in the north-central town of Vavuniya.

He said the move reflected the government's determination to compel Tamil residents, who were forced by the rebels to flee their northern Jaffna stronghold before it fell to government troops in early December, to return to the town.

As a result of the pay halt, refugees faced the prospect of running out of money if they failed to return.

Western aid agencies say at least 200,000 people fled from the Jaffna peninsula to avoid the fighting.

They say the rebels are resettling the refugees on the northern mainland known as the Vanni, across the Jaffna Lagoon.

The Liberation Tigers Of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) rebels say they will not allow the refugees to return as long as the army occupies Jaffna town, spiritual capital of the homeland they are fighting

for in the island's north and east.

More than 50,000 people have died in the war since 1983.

The government, eager to win hearts and minds, wants families to return to homes in Jaffna, where a major rebuilding operation is under way. Masons, carpenters, cement and roofing tiles are being shipped to the north.

Jaffna residents who arrived in this frontline town, bordering the Vanni, said banks in the region faced a liquidity crisis as the money circulation had dropped.

"People are finding it very difficult to manage their daily needs," said a resident.

"Banks depend on deposits to pay customers' cheques but nowadays people are not depositing money."

Money lenders were making a killing by charging up to 40 per cent commission to cash cheques, he said.

President Chandrika Kumaratunga assured Colombo-based Tamil leaders last week the government was doing all it could to alleviate suffering in rebel-controlled refugee camps by sending in regular shipments of food.

The Tigers said Saturday that large numbers of Tamil

civilians in the Jaffna peninsula were leaving their homes and heading south for the Vanni mainland despite a government request for those who had already left to return.

Tamil Tiger guerrillas have asked Tamils living in their sprawling territory in northern Sri Lanka not to migrate to areas held by the government, Tamil sources said Monday.

The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) has appealed to the tens of thousands of Tamil civilians who fled the former rebel bastion of Jaffna to put up with "temporary hardships" for the sake of the Tamil cause.

A four-page LTTE statement being circulated among the refugees in the island's north said Tamils should bear with the "difficulties" rather than move over to the government zone, travellers from the region said.

The statement says that going over and living in government areas would undermine the cause of the Tamil struggle, a traveller said on arrival in this capital city.

Thousands of Tamils are living in LTTE-controlled areas in parts of Jaffna peninsula in the north and in the huge Vanni mainland south of it after fleeing their

homes to escape fighting between the army and Tigers.

The LTTE says more than 230,000 people have crossed from Jaffna to the mainland by boats, while thousands more are still waiting in rebel-held parts of Jaffna peninsula for transport.

Tamil sources and newspapers here say many Tamils in LTTE areas were trying to migrate to government-held territory, worrying the Tigers.

"There is discontent among the refugees from Jaffna," said Dharmalingam Siddharthan, a Tamil MP. "Those who had houses and other amenities find it tough to lead the life of a refugee."

The state-run Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation said last week that Tamils attacked a local LTTE office in Jaffna's Vadamarachchi region with stones after being refused permission to go to the Colombo-controlled town of Vavuniya.

Tamils living in the LTTE zone have to get "visas" from the rebels to travel to other parts of Sri Lanka.

The LTTE says the Jaffna Tamils were beginning to lead a normal life at Vanni mainland and that it has helped build thousands of houses for the mass of refugees.

Japan renews pledge for peace

TOKYO (AFP)

— Japanese leaders pledged anew Monday that their country would remain a land of peace, in belated ceremonies to mark the end of World War II that again skirted any reference to Japanese responsibility for the conflict.

Analysts said the verbal waltz by Prime Minister Tomiichi Murayama and Emperor Akihito marked Japan's last chance to use the 50th anniversary of the end of the war to make a clean breast of its guilt.

Mr. Murayama, in the brief but solemn commemoration in a central Tokyo theatre, said: "I'd like to pray from my soul for all the people in the world who lost their lives during World War II."

"The war has also brought a number of hardships to those who survived. In our land, devastated by the war, we have resolved never to repeat the tragic experience of the conflict," he said.

Emperor Akihito — son of the wartime emperor, Hirohito — flanked Mr. Murayama for the ceremony, which was attended by 1,600 people, including representatives of young people from 65 countries.

It was initially scheduled to have been held on Aug. 15, to mark the day when Emperor Hirohito announced Japan's surrender. But the government postponed the event after its two main components, the Liberal Democratic and the Social Democrat parties (LDP and SDP), squabbled over the format for the gathering.

Mr. Murayama's address, made no reference to Japan's role in initiating the conflict by making an unprovoked attack on the United States, or its appalling record of treating civilians in occupied territory or prisoners of war.

His words seemed even to fall short of the limited apologies 'be made in the runup to the 50th anniversary conflict.

Emperor Akihito said: "I mourn for all people who lost their precious lives in the war and reflect upon the sorrow of the bereaved that has yet to be healed."

Gonzalez agrees to lead Socialists into election battle yet again

MADRID (AFP) — Prime Minister Felipe Gonzalez ended months of speculation Monday and agreed to lead his embattled Socialist Party into general elections for a record seventh time.

Mr. Gonzalez, in office for the past 13 years, accepted the nomination by the ruling Socialist Workers' Party (PSOE) executive for the polls scheduled for March.

Juan Carlos Ibarra, president of the Extremadura (western Spain) regional government, said shortly before the PSOE executive meeting got under way that Mr. Gonzalez was a "solution" for the party which has been tainted by a string of political setbacks and scandals.

Although opinion surveys credit the opposition conservative Popular Party (PP) of Jose Maria Aznar with a wide lead in the polls, the Socialists believe Mr. Gonzalez can turn things around and significantly boost their chances.

The nomination marked a remarkable comeback for the prime minister who had seemed irreparably damaged by a wave of financial and political scandals, although he is not out of the wood yet.

He is riding high after basking in the glory of his successful hosting of a EU summit which ended here Saturday, bringing to an end Spain's presidency of the 15-member organisation.

Not so long ago, however, he had apparently told friends he was "tired" after 21 years at the helm of the PSOE. He had even begun to pack up his personal belongings from the prime ministerial residence after deciding with his wife, Carmen Romero, not to run again.

But PSOE bosses cranked up the pressure on Mr. Gonzalez to change his mind after Javier Solana, a close ally of the premier, was appointed NATO secretary-general two weeks ago, raising the profile of the party and the country.

The NATO assignment also eliminated Mr. Gonzalez's major rival for the party leadership, Mr. Solana, the only minister to

have figured in every government since the PSOE came to power in 1982, had been regarded as his likely successor.

The media meanwhile pointed to the "annoyance" shown by his wife in recent public appearances as the best indication of a new lease of political life.

Mr. Gonzalez' death on had been widely anticipated. "Felipe VII," asked the El Pais daily, close to the PSOE, "the premier will almost certainly agree tomorrow (Monday) to be the Socialist candidate for the seventh time."

Officially the PSOE standard bearer will be picked by the party's federal committee Friday but Mr. Gonzalez is assured of securing a clear majority.

Yet Mr. Gonzalez faces an uphill battle in his bid to edge past the PP in the March polls.

He is one of four high-ranking PSOE members accused of planning the state-sponsored "dirty war" against Basque separatists.

Earlier this month Jose Barriouneo, interior minister between 1982 and 1988, appeared before the Supreme Court to face charges that he helped set up the anti-terrorism Liberation Group (GAL), whose members are held responsible for at least 22 murders of Basque separatist militants from 1983 to 1987.

Last month Mr. Barriouneo became the first member of Spain's democratic government to be deprived of parliamentary immunity against prosecution.

Three other senior PSOE members still enjoy immunity: Mr. Gonzalez himself, former Defence Minister Narcis Serra and Socialist Party leader Txiki Benegas.

Opposition parties said they would push for Mr. Gonzalez to appear in court to explain how much he knew about the squads.

But the case against the Gonzalez administration received a blow earlier this month when a Senate commission suspended investigations into the affair.

New Haiti leader to face tough decisions

PORT-AU-PRINCE (R)

— With Haiti's elections Sunday marked by relative order and a low turnout, likely winner Rene Preval must confront economic reform and long-term security matters as top priorities as he leads the country into the next century.

Mr. Preval, a close adviser to outgoing President Jean-Bertrand Aristide, was widely expected to sweep Sunday's presidential race from a field of 14 candidates.

The former prime minister climbed to fame on the tremendous popularity of Mr. Aristide, who must constitutionally leave office when his term ends in February.

But dejected Haitian voters, weary of the crushing poverty that has not relented since Mr. Aristide was restored to power by multinational troops last year after being ousted in a 1991 coup, straggled to the polls

at a estimated rate of about 35 per cent.

"Today is an important day in Haitian history," Mr. Preval said after casting his ballot. "It's the first time in our history that a democratically elected president goes to vote with all smiles for a successor."

If elected, Mr. Preval will inherit a deeply divided country emerging from decades of brutal dictatorship and will have until the year 2000 to rebuild the country's shattered institutions and crumbling economy.

"As far as economic misery is concerned, there are no emergency measures against misery because it is something that is structural and endemic," Mr. Preval told reporters.

But a critical economic reform package which calls for the privatisation of nine state-owned industries as a condition for \$100 million in badly needed aid will be

among the first items up for discussion.

Mr. Aristide backed off from the agreement in October, leading his prime minister, Smark Michel, to resign and international lending agencies to withhold aid.

Mr. Preval has indicated he might favour allowing private investment to help revive Haiti's non-functioning sugar and flour mills.

The issue of maintaining an international security presence beyond February, when the U.N. peacekeeping mandate expires, will also require a quick decision.

Haiti's new civilian police force is frail and has shown signs of weakness in several recent shooting incidents, raising concern among observers about whether the force will be able to keep the peace when the remaining 5,722 troops, including some 2,000 U.S. soldiers, leave.

مَدِينَةُ الْبَصَل

Peres unveils Syria points

(Continued from page 1)

proposal included a demand that Syria guarantee an end to attacks on Israel by the pro-Iranian Hizbollah guerrilla movement based in Lebanon.

Mr. Peres outlined the understanding as follows:

— No preconditions will be set by either side.

— The talks' aims, not manner, are what is important.

Here Mr. Peres said that while Israel still wanted "to open negotiations with a summit between the president of Syria and the prime minister of Israel... it is not a condition." Syria has so far refused to raise the talks to senior political echelons.

— The content of the negotiations would influence how long they last and their results.

— There was a differentiation between "issues which are a point of contention and those which require resolution."

Mr. Peres said, for example, the final border was in contention water and security arrangements simply had to be resolved.

— Negotiations were to be conducted on all subjects.

— Ways to turn the Golan Heights into a centre of economic cooperation rather than of military confrontation would be sought.

— A central role would be required of the United States.

— Preserving quiet on Israel's border with Lebanon was a goal.

Mr. Peres has declined to say how an agreement would deal with the 14,000 Israeli Jews who live on the Golan Heights. It is premature to discuss that, he told reporters this week.

Benjamin Netanyahu, the leader of Israel's opposition Likud Party, criticised Mr. Peres' approach. "When you go down from the Golan Heights it can open a future war," he told Israel Channel Two television.

He said Mr. Peres was paving the way for Syria to return to the shores of the Sea of Galilee. "With this, peace will not come," Mr. Netanyahu said.

Polls show a majority of Israelis agree. Mr. Peres has said an accord would be submitted to them in the form of a referendum.

Sheikh Sabah retracts resignation

(Continued from page 1)

and the most senior government spokesman to parliamentary debates.

Asked by Al Qabas whether rumours he had offered his resignation were true, Sheikh Sabah was quoted as replying: "This talk has plenty of truth in it."

"It is a result of difference

in points of views about foreign policy," he added. Kuwait's ties with Jordan improved this year.

This month Kuwait restored normal telephone and postal links between the two countries. But despite the improvement both sides have complained that the other is sending mixed signals.

PNA, Hamas launch dialogue

(Continued from page 1)

PLO delegation head Salim Zanoun told the delegates: "We must show the unity which we have kept when Israel waged that Gaza and Jericho would break into internal strife and become a new Afghanistan."

Mr. Zanoun said before talks started that the dialogue had to find a "formula" to avoid disputes between the PLO-dominated Palestinian National Authority (PNA) and Hamas turning into violent strife "like in Afghanistan and Somalia and Lebanon."

Mr. Zanoun said the talks would go on through Wednesday, when PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat

would arrive in Cairo "to attend a full day's session."

A Hamas delegate, Osama Abu Hamdan, said that while he wanted closer ties with Mr. Arafat's supporters, that had nothing to do with treaties that the PNA has reached with Israel.

"We are coming with open minds and open hearts for talks to close ranks with our brothers, and we hope a positive outcome will result," said Mr. Abu Hamdan, the Hamas representative in the Iranian capital Tehran.

He added, however: "Our position is clear. We are not participating in elections under the Israeli occupation."

Israel 'clarifies' stand

(Continued from page 12)

close Jordanian-Israeli cooperation.

"In the first year, we concentrated on the framework for cooperation," including the signing of the bilateral agreements and the lifting of Jordanian laws that imposed a boycott of Israel, the ambassador said. Focus will be shifted in the second year to promote economic cooperation and business interaction between the governments as well as the private sectors of the two countries, he added.

In general, there is a continuous process of contacts between the two sides and it is continuing on various levels, the ambassador said, citing a few examples. "Today, as we speak, a team of Jordanian academics are

attending a seminar at Tel Aviv Open University on satellite teaching... the joint Jordanian-Israeli committee on Jordan Rift Valley development is meeting at a kibbutz (collective farm) near the Dead Sea..." and a seminar is being held in Amman on "Smoothing the Path to Peace: Jordanian-Palestinian-Israeli relations."

In addition, he said, there are the "continued consultations" between Jordanian and Israeli businessmen on joint ventures and business opportunities and the wave of "hundreds of Israeli tourists present in Jordan every day from Petra to Umm Qais."

"These reflect the fact that there is a growing momentum in the Jordanian-Israeli relationship," he said.

Nablus sweep reflects position

(Continued from page 1)

Palestinians they suspected of being criminals or informers.

The Israeli human rights group B'tselem on Monday urged Palestinian security forces to distance themselves from Mr. Tabouk and put him on trial. In the past two years, dozens of renegade streetfighters have been recruited by Palestinian police, mainly in the Gaza Strip, in order to neutralise them.

"Ahmed Tabouk and his gang have committed dangerous crimes against innocent people," B'tselem researcher Bassem Eid told the Associated Press.

"At least three people have been killed and 20 were injured by Tabouk and his gang," said Mr. Eid, who has collected testimony from victims during several trips to Nablus.

B'tselem plans a detailed report on Mr. Tabouk's activities in coming weeks. Mr. Eid said. B'tselem gained credibility among Palestinians when it monitored Israeli human rights viola-

tions during the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Bethlehem pullout on Thursday

Israel plans to pull out of Bethlehem on Thursday night in advance of Christmas celebrations although the date is not final, an Israeli senior army official said.

"We plan to redeploy Thursday night," Brigadier General Herzl Gedj told reporters. Israel originally had planned to redeploy from Bethlehem on Dec. 18.

Gen. Gedj, head of the joint security coordination and cooperation committee, said the date would only be confirmed after completion of a bypass road to be used by Jewish settlers in the area. He said the army hoped to finish the road on Tuesday night.

Under the deal expanding Palestinian self-rule signed in September, Israel was to hand over six main West Bank towns by year's end.

Despair assails Palestinians trapped in a gilded cage

The Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) peace agreement with Israel has left two former fighters abandoned in a U.N. no man's land. Robert Fisk reports

across the Jordan River to the occupied West Bank not long after the 1967 Arab-Israeli war, and Mr. Al Gulani 10 years for driving a carload of explosives near Israeli-occupied Ramallah — both men were turned back by Lebanese soldiers the moment they were expelled across the Israeli border last April.

Back in the spring they thought a few complaints from the U.N. would secure their future. Their expulsion by Israel to Lebanon, in contravention of Articles 45 and 49 of the Geneva Convention, could surely be reversed.

Prematurely old at 58 and with a quarter-century of Israeli jails behind him, Mr. Khodr, a PLO loyalist who would now like to go to Gaza, is in no state to take

up arms again. Besides, the peace agreement with Israel means history has passed him by. Mr. Al Gulani would be content merely to join his brother Omar in Jordan. But the Israelis refused both men permission to re-cross the border, claiming they were still security threats. Jordan then announced that Mr. Al Gulani was a threat to its own security.

When humanitarian workers tried to arrange a family visit from Omar to Mohammad Al Gulani, the Lebanese refused him permission to pass through Jordan; Lebanon was still technically at war with Israel, they said. Now that Amman had made peace with Tel Aviv, he could surely travel through Israel. But the

ter to Abu Ammar (Mr. Arafat) in July. Mr. Al Gulani says. "A few days later, I received a phone call from someone in the PLO office in Gaza, called Dr. Sami. He said Mr. Arafat had given his permission for both of us to move to Gaza, but the Israelis had vetoed our going there on the grounds of security. That's all. Nothing else. And we are still here."

Mr. Khodr is building a cement wall for the U.N. soldiers, partly to show his gratitude for their personal kindness, while Mr. Al Gulani wanders the camp, buying clothes and shoes at the PX store, watching a movie on Irish history given him by Irish troops, playing football and chess with his U.N. protectors, receiving a monthly joint stipend of

£300 shared with Mr. Khodr from the local PLO office up the Lebanese coast in Rashidiya.

The two Palestinians listen to the Arabic service of the BBC and Israeli radio. When Mr. Khodr suffered a hernia the U.N. operated on him. They have tried to cure Mr. Al Gulani's ear infection and asthma but the two Palestinians suffer the twin curse of international generosity and personal despair. "Of course we get angry, because we want to start new lives," Mr. Al Gulani says.

"We have served our sentences. We have paid for what we did for the PLO. Now the PLO has made peace with Israel, but we rot here without a future. Why? I get angry, even at the U.N. They want to send a guard with me wherever I go. They are kind, but what can I do?"

It was one of their United Nations protectors who found the right words to describe Mr. Khodr and Mr. Al Gulani. "Political ghosts" is what he called them.

The Independent

No Crown Prince visit in January, Israel says

(Continued from page 1)

come after the Holy Month, which ends in late February. He declined to elaborate except that the Crown Prince would be contacting Israeli "social, economic, political and cultural institutions" whenever he chooses to make the visit.

It will be the first official visit of any member of the Royal Family to Israel. His Majesty King Hussein and Prince Hassan went to Israel last month but the visits came in connection with the death of Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin.

The King attended the assassinated prime minister's funeral in West Jerusalem on Nov. 6, and the Crown Prince went to Israel one day later to pay condolences to the Israeli leadership and the Rabin family.

In comments to the Jordan Times on Monday, Ambassador Shafir rejected all suggestions that political considerations were behind Friday's incident at the King Hussein Bridge where Israel refused entry to the Jordanian group which wanted to visit Nablus.

"The group was not in touch with Israeli authorities but handled the applications (for entry permit) through

the Palestinian self-rule authority," he said. The Israeli authorities received the applications Thursday afternoon and "there was not enough time" to process them in time for the group's crossing to the West Bank on Friday, he said.

The information that the entry permits were not ready was broadcast on Israel Radio Thursday afternoon so that the group would not seek to travel on Friday, he said. "But they turned up at the bridge anyway on Friday, and we could not have allowed their entry without going through the right procedures," he added.

The group would have been "welcome in Israel," he said, "particularly that they wanted to celebrate" with the Palestinians the launching of autonomy in Nablus, "which is a result of our peace agreement with the Palestinians."

The incident drew heavy anti-Israeli criticism in the Jordanian press, with newspapers carrying numerous articles and editorial comments assailing the Jewish state.

The group that was denied entry included former Prime Minister Taher Al Masri, at

least 20 members of Parliament, university presidents and professors, journalists, municipal councillors and independent personalities.

Columnists suggested that Israel had deliberately denied entry to the group because it did not want a high-profile Jordanian visit to Nablus or that Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat was somehow behind the denial because he perceived the visit as politically oriented.

Mr. Masri, who was one of the coordinators of the visit, said the group, many of whose members have close ties with Nablus, had only wanted to "show the world the close relationship between Jordanians and Palestinians" by attending a celebration in the West Bank town launching Palestinian self-rule.

In general terms, Ambassador Shafir said Monday, "we recognise and respect the right of every Jordanian" to visit Israel following the signing of the Jordanian-Israeli peace treaty in October 1994.

But, for the moment, the embassy in Amman operating out of a handful of rooms at a hotel since December last year, cannot simply accommodate any large number of individual applicants for visas, he said.

As such, the issuance of visas is restricted to groups, where the embassy can deal with one travel agent acting on behalf of 50 or 100 applicants, according to the ambassador.

However, individual visas are issued to certain categories of applicants such as businessmen, journalists, delegations etc. in addition to those who apply on health grounds.

The embassy will open its door for individual applicants when it moves to a new premises in the Al Rabiah district near the embassy of the People's Republic of China in about six months' time, said the ambassador.

The mission in Amman will host the "largest Israeli consulate," the then foreign minister and now prime minister, Shimon Peres, said in late October while he was here to attend the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) economic summit.

Newspapers cautioned

(Continued from page 1)

being examined by courts and investigated by the prosecutor general as long as this information is not the minutes of the trial or the investigation.

Newspapers, he said, will be fulfilling their duties towards the citizens' right to information by publishing information on such cases.

Mr. Shbeilat was detained on Dec. 9 but no charges against him have been filed yet. The prosecutor general has refused to grant bail to Mr. Shbeilat, who was sentenced to life imprisonment in 1993 after being found guilty of charges of sedition. Mr. Shbeilat, whose current case is receiving wide coverage in the tabloid press, was released under a general amnesty issued by King Hussein.

Britain opts out of nuclear power

By Simon Beavis

THE EXPANSION of Britain's nuclear power industry was called to a dramatic halt last week when executives acknowledged there was no economic case for building further multi-billion-pound reactors at Sizewell in Suffolk and Hinkley in Somerset.

The announcement, by British Energy, is the biggest setback to nuclear energy since the government ordered a moratorium on the building of stations in 1989 and could be a watershed in Britain's 50-year experiment with nuclear power.

Environmental groups immediately proclaimed the death of Britain's nuclear power industry. But power unions accused the industry of sacrificing thousands of jobs and the long-term security of nuclear power to smooth the path for next year's planned privatisation of existing reactors.

Labour said the decision was a result of the government's chaotic privatisation plans. The party's energy spokesman, John Birtle, said: "It is time the shambles was put to an end and privatisation was halted."

British Energy is the newly formed holding company that will control the most modern reactors of Nuclear Electric and Scot-

tish Nuclear being lined up for next year's \$4.5 billion sell-off.

Eight months ago the government ruled out providing up to \$1.5 billion in subsidies to build new stations, cast doubt on private investors filling the funding gap and said it could force no circumstances in which nuclear reactors would compete with cheaper gas stations.

The two stations affected are the \$4.5 billion Sizewell C plant — a twin reactor based on the newly opened Sizewell B station in Suffolk — and Hinkley C, a smaller, \$3 billion pressurised water reactor (PWR) in Somerset.

The industry argues that the Sizewell station would have created 6,000 jobs on site and 8,000 around the country during the seven-year construction.

British Energy blamed the "uncertainty" and low energy prices for its decision. Building nuclear stations would be looked at only "provided it offers an appropriate return to shareholders."

The city — which has been sceptical about privatisation — has long expected plans for new PWRs to be dropped in the run-up to the sell-off. Instead, it has been expecting British Energy to announce plans to invest in gas-fired sta-

tions, which are cheaper to build and run.

But British Energy refused to commit itself to gas. Bob Hawley, chief executive of British Energy, said: "The future of UK energy prices is insufficiently certain for British Energy to invest in new nuclear or indeed any other form of new generation in the short-term. Our current priority is the successful privatisation of British Energy."

Industry sources suggested that Sizewell C could have produced power at 2.5p a unit. Although this compares well with 2.4p for the advanced gas cooled reactors being sold off next year, it was not enough to justify a new capital project.

Friends of the Earth and Greenpeace said Britain had built its last nuclear station. "This is the final nail in the nuclear coffin," said Patrick Green, an FoE campaigner.

Tony Cooper, secretary of the power unions' joint council, said: "Throwing in the towel on a new nuclear build programme before privatisation has even taken place clearly signals British Energy's intention to concentrate on alternative methods of electricity generation in the interests of short-term profit."

The Guardian

Quakers fight to keep 'Eton of the Middle East'

By Michael Elwyn

ONE OF the most famous British schools overseas, which for more than a century has educated the sons of kings, presidents and prime ministers in the Middle East, will be removed from British control unless a Beirut court ruling can be reversed.

Brummana High School in Lebanon, founded by Quakers in 1876, survived 15 years of civil war during which all British staff were forced to leave. But after a surprise judgement preventing the London-based Quaker Peace and Service from regaining control, there are fears that it may be run down or sold by a small group of former pupils.

The school site, on the side of the mountains overlooking Beirut, is now one of the most valuable in Lebanon. Brummana, a largely Christian town, has boomed as the reconstruction of the country gathers pace. The property, still legally registered to the Quakers and accountable to the British Charity Com-

missioners, is estimated to be worth more than \$64 million.

The dispute over its ownership has caused uproar throughout the Middle East. The school, with more than 900 pupils and provision for boarding, has long been the most famous British institution in the region.

The dispute is being portrayed by nationalists in Lebanon as an attempt by London to reimpose "colonial" conditions on the Eton of the Middle East. But former pupils, parents and local politicians believe that, if the Quakers are refused the right to resume their work at Brummana, the credibility of Lebanon's appeal to foreign investors to return will be undermined.

As the war worsened, the Quakers attempted to keep Brummana running normally. But overseas students were unable to attend and, fearing kidnap, British staff left.

In 1987 the school was temporarily entrusted to a seven-man committee of local old boys. They kept it open but two left the com-

mittee, a third died and the remaining members did not adhere to its constitution.

After the war ended, parents and old boys began a campaign to bring back the Quakers. They complained that the school had no headmaster, no proper management and that standards were declining rapidly. Brummana is now reported to be "bottom of the second division" in the informal rating of the American University of Beirut.

The Quakers will not give details of the dispute, which they have been attempting since 1992 to settle by quiet diplomacy. They have sent seven missions to Lebanon, but were so alarmed by developments that this summer they went to court. Against all expectations, the judge ruled in favour of the committee.

The Quakers appointed a new headmaster and school manager who arrived in the summer, but were warned that guards would prevent them from entering the school.

The Times

120 is 120

Cabinet approves key foreign ownership law

By Suleiman Al Khalidi
Reuter

AMMAN — Jordan has approved a law allowing wider foreign ownership and direct entry into its stock market to help attract foreign capital, the finance minister said Sunday.

"This system is an easy, transparent system which provides the opportunity for substantial foreign investment, and along with a reduced tax system, it will enhance the return on stock," Finance Minister Basel Jaraneh told Reuters.

Mr. Jaraneh said the Cabinet Saturday approved two laws on foreign ownership, including a regulation allowing direct foreign entry into the stock market.

The laws eliminate cumbersome prior approvals by the Cabinet, permit purchases through licensed brokers

and set ownership limits. They also provide tax exemptions for investment in less developed regions in Jordan.

"As for the stock market, it will be possible for a foreign investor to buy directly, on condition the foreign ownership in a publicly listed company does not exceed 50 per cent at the end of close of trade in the official market," Mr. Jaraneh said.

Most foreign investment in the more than 100 listed firms in Amman Financial Market has been on hold awaiting the new law.

However, there has been strong foreign interest with funds obtaining previous permission to invest hundreds of millions of dollars.

"This system is very transparent and easy and addresses investors' complaints that the regulations were not easy," Mr. Jaraneh said.

Mr. Jaraneh said the laws allowed 100 per cent foreign ownership in some industries.

However, the government imposed a 50 per cent limit on retail businesses, banks and insurance, transport, telecommunications, mining, construction and agriculture. It also set a 25 per cent limit for publishing and printing.

Investors are pinning hopes on foreign funds over the next year. Mr. Jaraneh said the new regulations would boost confidence in the country as an attractive emerging market.

"I think foreign investment in the stock market will be substantial, and noticeable investments will come as a result in 1996, with one investor encouraging the other to come," Mr. Jaraneh said.

Foreign investment, largely Arab, makes up 31.9 per cent of the \$4.4 billion capitalised market.

Russian poll results not seen hitting reforms

MOSCOW (R) — Russia's parliamentary election, in which communists and nationalists took an early lead, has removed big doubts overhanging financial markets and poses no immediate threat to economic reform, analysts said Monday.

Most Russian markets, rarely sensitive to political events, took the elections to the State Duma lower house of parliament in their stride and economic analysts said they did not believe the poll would lead to a major shift in economic policy.

"It doesn't look like the government has taken a sufficient hit to force anything dramatic in this area," said a senior Western economist in Moscow.

With nearly 30 per cent of votes counted, more than a fifth of voters had chosen the communists. Vladimir Zhirinovskiy's ultra-nationalist Liberal Democratic Party had 11 per cent, Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin's centrist Our Home is Russia had 9.5 per cent and the liberal Yabloko Grouping was on 8.4 per cent.

"I think it is going to be business as usual and with a great deal of difficulty," the economist said.

Communist policies — if they could implement them in full — would reverse much of Russia's market reforms, bringing back expensive subsidies of the past, stepping up state controls and slowing privatisation.

But the Duma has few powers compared to the president and the government and both sides will find their hands partly tied because the old Duma has already approved a 1996 budget.

Analysts recalled the 1993 election, when Mr. Zhirinovskiy's success caused alarm but did not prevent the Duma's work.

"I don't think the results of these elections will prevent such work. I don't think there will be any critical majority, left-wing for example, which would hinder such work," Georgy Satarov, a top Yeltsin aide, told NTV independent television.

Stock prices fell on the election results but the rouble was unchanged and the fact the election marathon was

finally over was seen lifting selling pressure in some debt markets.

"I think people had some expectations for a slightly more reformist result so that will be a negative factor but I think that will be overshadowed on the market by the fact that it is over," said analyst Tom Reed of AIOC Capital in Moscow.

Four years of economic reform have created thousands of privately-owned firms but driven millions of people below the poverty line.

Dissatisfaction with the results of market economics was seen as a major factor behind the communists' popularity.

But analysts said the Duma has limited powers to interfere in reform.

The main levers of economic policy lie with the president and key legislation such as the 1996 budget will restrain them. The budget goes to parliament's upper house on Tuesday but is expected to be passed.

"In the longer term, I think there is nothing the communists can do because there is nothing the Duma can do," Mr. Reed said.

He said privatisation, which has underpinned four years of market reform in Russia, was ultimately controlled by President Boris Yeltsin, who decreed two months ago that policy on state sell-offs would be in his hands.

"I'm not sure the Duma has enough power to slow down or halt privatisation but that may be positive because it means less paper coming on to the market," said equities analyst Dmitry Kryukov of Renaissance Capital in Moscow.

"I guess the markets may be on hold for a while just to see what the new Duma will do, what direction the government will take and what position President Yeltsin will have," he added.

Russia's resurgent communists are not favourites with Western energy investors, but industry analysts said Monday a conservative win in the parliamentary election would not cause oil majors to pack their bags.

"If you're asking if people are going to pull out, I would

tell you no," a senior Western industry source in Moscow said.

"This is no longer 1917 and the economy has already changed so much, there may be little the communists can do," said Michel Lebedeff, director of French oil firm Total in Moscow. "They can try and turn things back, but the industrial reality remains. Russia needs the investment and knows it."

Communists leader Genady Zyuganov raised alarms last month when he told Western businessmen he was committed to foreign investment but thought the energy sector should remain under state control.

The communists also want to curtail privatisation of the

oil and gas industry, while their position on reform of the crude oil transport sector is unknown.

But Craig Kennedy, senior consultant at Cambridge Energy Research Associates in Moscow, said he was not worried. He said the nationalists had lost ground in the polls. Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin's government was still on track and that the communists' campaign bark was barker than its legislative bite.

"Zyuganov has actually voted in favour of key foreign investment legislation," Mr. Kennedy said.

Investors said they were more worried about the legal limbo of Russia's production-sharing law, a key document

designed to unlock planned, multi-billion dollar investments in oil and gas.

Ironically, the communists and ultra-nationalists have already approving the draft law, after revising it to make it less friendly to Western investors.

Some reformers, who drafted the original law, are now complaining the revised draft is not good enough and have said they may try to block its passage.

Mr. Kennedy said another good sign of the early election results was that Russia's oil-rich regions were no longer lobbying for political autonomy from Moscow, as is breakaway Chechnya, a key link in the crude oil pipeline system.

Shutdown continues as U.S. budget war escalates

WASHINGTON (AFP) — A damaging budget war that has crippled the U.S. government escalated Monday as the White House vetoed two spending bills that would have softened the blow of a partial government shutdown.

But President Bill Clinton offered a ray of hope, telling reporters that he expected to discuss the impasse during the day with the leaders of the Republican-controlled Congress.

"I intend to talk to them about it," Mr. Clinton said at a news conference to announce his veto of the bills. "I would like very much if we could just sit down and work through this."

Mr. Clinton cited the "serious, serious erosion" of environmental protection and dramatic cuts to health care and other spending contained in the legislation as the reason for the vetoes.

Meanwhile, about 260,000 "non-essential" federal

workers were being told to return home until further notice because the government had no legal authority to pay them.

The Commerce Department also announced it would release no economic reports during the shutdown — the second such partial

closure in about a month.

Without a deal to at least temporarily fund the closed-down agencies and departments — and that prospect seemed elusive — the impasse could drag on for days as both sides debate how to balance the budget in seven years.

Pakistan lags on human development — World Bank

ISLAMABAD (R) — Pakistan is failing to lift its health and literacy levels to those achieved by poorer nations, according to a World Bank report.

The bank's Pakistan Poverty Assessment Report, completed in September, acknowledged that the proportion of poor people in the population had fallen in the 1970s and 1980s.

Pakistan had about 38.7 million people below the poverty line — defined as a per capita income of about \$50 — in 1990/91, compared to about 43.6 million in 1984/85, it said.

But "human development indicators" for a population estimated at 128 million in mid-1994/95 were lagging far behind.

"Pakistan's performance in important human development indicators has been the Achilles' Heel of the country's development effort," said Hugo Diaz, the World Bank's senior country economist for Pakistan, who prepared the report.

"Without sustained gains in health status and accumulation of skills, continued growth in labour productivity and incomes will not be possible," he said in a statement.

The report said Pakistan, with a per capita gross national product (GNP) of \$420 in 1992, trailed behind human development averages for all low-income countries, which have an average per capita GNP of (\$390, or \$370 excluding India and China).

Progress in reducing infant mortality rates from 1960 to 1990 puts it 50th out of 71 developing countries. It was 35th out of 43 countries in increasing primary school enrolment.

Pakistan's total fertility rate is 65 per cent higher than the average for all low-income countries, its infant mortality rate is 30 per cent higher, its adult literacy rate is 25 percentage points lower and its gross primary and secondary school enrolment ratios not much more than half the average.

"Pakistan's high fertility rate is a particular concern," the report said. "Growing at the rate of three per cent a year, the population will double every 23 years, placing enormous demands on basic services, even just to preserve current levels of coverage and quality. It will also place severe pressures on natural resources and the labour market."

Disparities in human development indicators for men and women were greater in Pakistan than averages for all low-income countries, despite some progress in closing the gap.

The report said access to education, health and family planning remained limited, especially among poor rural women and girls. Services were often not provided or were of low quality. There was little accountability and government resource allocations were too low to provide adequate services.

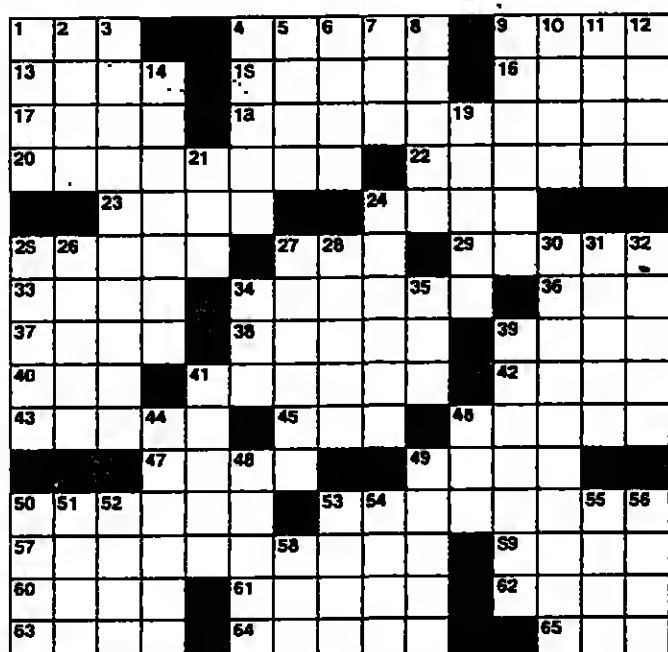
Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto's Social Action Programme, which seeks to tackle these shortcomings, had made "considerable progress," but its achievements remained fragile, it said.

The report urged the government to deepen its economic and institutional reforms, strengthen its social safety net and develop a long-term strategy for financing social services.

THE Daily Crossword by Bernice Gordon

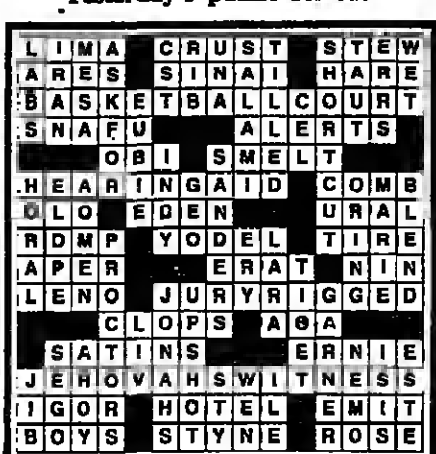
ACROSS

- 1 Foot
- 4 Ground swell
- 9 Sign at a street crossing
- 13 "— plenty o'..."
- 15 Group of scouts
- 16 Sheltered bay
- 17 Kind of guide
- 18 Steinbeck novel
- 20 With keen judgment
- 22 Blood bank suppliers
- 23 Red deer
- 24 Sassy
- 25 Tear away
- 27 Org. for Nicklaus
- 29 "Lou Grant"
- 33 Damage
- 34 Home to Harald V
- 36 Mouths
- 37 River in Austria
- 38 African antelope
- 39 Pack tightly
- 40 Ripen
- 41 Filches
- 42 — boy!
- 43 Succinct
- 45 Mr. Koppel
- 46 Loathe
- 47 Loyal
- 49 Just
- 50 South American
- 53 Knowledge
- 57 Author of "The Shoes of the Fisherman"
- 59 — aye
- 60 Blueprint
- 61 Wipe clean
- 62 Tissue
- 63 Kitchen herb
- 64 Small children
- 65 Cincinnati pro



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Yesterday's puzzle solved:



DOWN

- 1 Type of bread
- 2 Selves
- 3 Scarlett O'Hara
- 4 Spirited horse
- 5 Caspian Sea feeder
- 6 Promising
- 7 Achieved
- 8 Lyric poem
- 9 Fragrances
- 10 Fuss
- 11 Above
- 12 Writes
- 14 Self-avident statements
- 19 Raid
- 21 Explosive letters
- 24 Hocked
- 25 Grain
- 26 Scope
- 27 Well-mannered
- 28 Pan of a bunch
- 30 Part of the Hudson
- 31 Clio's sister
- 32 — of the Jungle
- 34 Unfamiliar
- 35 Breaks on TV
- 39 Body of advisers
- 41 Caravansary
- 44 Creator of Tristram Shandy
- 46 Swiss waterway
- 48 Not mounted, as a jewel
- 49 Trio of myth
- 50 Elec. units
- 51 Lopez theme song
- 52 Pull
- 53 Unauthorized disclosure
- 54 Abstract being
- 55 Afr. river
- 56 Pleased
- 58 Twisted out of shape

THE BETTER HALF. By Glasbergen



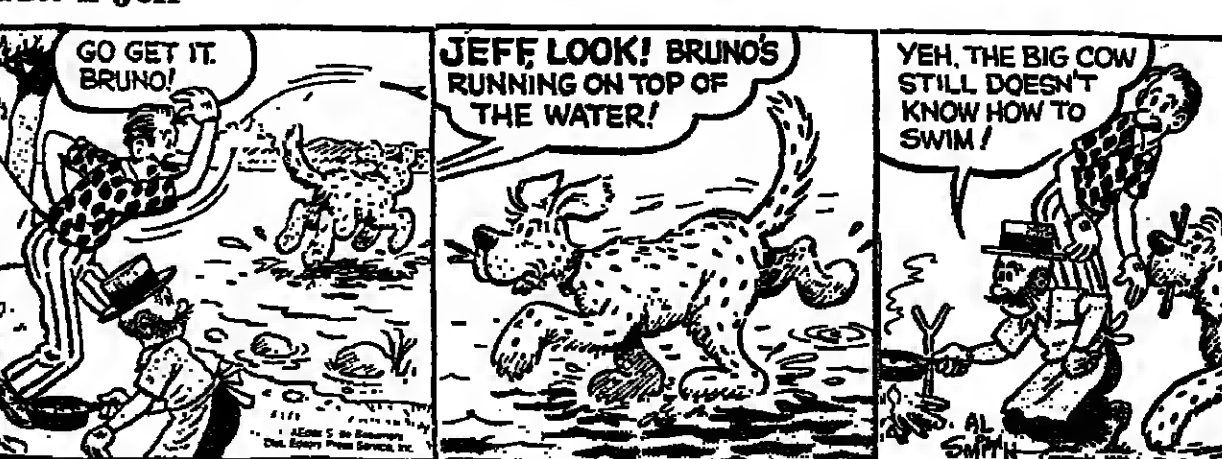
Peanuts



Andy Capp



Mutt'n'Jeff



HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR TUESDAY, DECEMBER 19, 1995

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) Be very precise in handling any tasks either in business or at home. Try to be more supportive of fellow associates.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) You may make plans for entertainment which could go awry, but take this in stride. Blame the planets if your mate acts up today.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) Begin the new week properly by steering clear of tensions at home and thereby avoid trouble. Don't invite loud friends into your home today.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) Be very careful in the answering of letters today so that you do not raise the wrath of others who can help you in your progress.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) Your judgement may not be good today, and you could make serious errors where finances and property matters are concerned.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) You may feel depressed or imposed upon today, so become more objective and everything will go much better for you.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) You feel you have too many personal duties to handle and cannot get more important things completed, but complete them anyway.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) You may find it difficult to gain personal aims today because others put obstacles in the path of your progress.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) Be careful not to do anything today which could spoil your name in the community in which you dwell.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) It's important you complete what you have begun today before going off to new interests and places which you desire.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) It is important that you make collections and pay pressing bills today and you can go after new business later tonight.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) Don't have long talks today with partners or disagreements could start which are better averted. Stay calm, cool and collected.

Birthstone of December: Turquoise — Zircon

Microsoft and NBC to start all news cable channel

NEW YORK (R) — In a move aimed at capturing news audiences well into the 21st century, Microsoft's billionaire chairman Bill Gates and NBC have said they were forming a 24-hour cable television news channel and Internet-based online service.

"Today NBC and Microsoft have come together to create news for the next millennium," said NBC President Bob Wright, as announced "one of our most kept secrets" — a joint venture that marries the world's biggest software company.

The venture has been a subject of intense media speculation for weeks and is the first of its kind in Microsoft

Corp. and NBC's parent company General Electric Co. hope will be many more joint projects in cyberspace.

The new 24-hour-a-day cable channel will compete with Ted Turner's Cable News Network (CNN), which has had a virtual monopoly on the all-news cable market for the past 15 years.

ABC last week announced plans to form an all-news cable network in 1997, but the NBC-Microsoft project will be launched in six months and will start by using a cable channel — NBC's "America's talking" — that is already in existence.

Mr. Wright said he expected the new cable service to have between 25

million and 35 million viewers by the end of 1996, compared to CNN's 67 million viewers. ABC's main obstacle in putting together an all-news channel is finding a distribution network.

Mr. Wright also said he did not expect developing the two new services to have any "unique" negative impact on NBC earnings for 1996, but he said that a greater staff is needed for both services.

A CNN spokesman, Steve Haworth, said the Microsoft-NBC project sounded a lot like what CNN was already doing. CNN's news pages on the worldwide web are already read by an estimated three million people a day, he said.

NBC and Redmond, Washington-based Microsoft said that NBC will handle news gathering for the joint venture, as well as for the Microsoft Network, the nascent online subscription service that Microsoft launched this year and which is also migrating to the Internet.

Microsoft will invest \$220 million over the next five years for its 50 per cent stake in the cable television venture, MSNBC Cable. In addition, the two companies also will invest another \$200 million over the next five years to develop the cable news venture.

The second venture will be called MSNBC Online, they said, an interactive service that will offer text, graphics, television pictures, photos and sound — through technology designed by Microsoft.

Mr. Wright said advances in digital technology will give people new control over news and information and added that online viewers will be able to customise their service to get the news they wanted, in whatever depth they needed.

"No network has ever offered news coverage of such breadth and depth before," Mr. Wright said.

Mr. Gates, whose comments were beamed to the New York news conference from Hong Kong, added, "one of the key

things is that both of the companies are saying we believe in the world of interactivity but we're bringing this world into broadcast."

"We'll be working with NBC to create innovative interactive news content and an integrated media experience," he added.

Mr. Wright said NBC will manage the cable network and the two com-

panies will cooperate in managing the interactive network.

The news service will be developed to integrate news delivery among broadcast, cable and the Internet computer network, the companies said in a news release.

The operation will combine NBC's international news organisation, its business news networks,

its local affiliates and its mass audience delivery, along with Microsoft's technology and software expertise, its brand name and its connection to the personal computer user.

Jack Welch, chairman of NBC's parent, General Electric (G.E.), said, "this is a big deal for G.E. because commerce is never going to be the same in the next decade."

JORDANIAN FINANCIAL MARKET				
HOUSING BANK CENTER, AMMAN, JORDAN				
TELEPHONE: 607171 / 607179				
ORGANIZED MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR MONDAY 18/12/1995				
COMPANY'S NAME	NO. OF SHARES TRADED	VALUE TRADED JD	PREV. CLOSING PRICE	CLOSING PRICE
ARAB BANK PLO	240	58610	239,000	235,500
JORDAN NATIONAL BANK	3220	14376	4,580	4,540
CATCO AMMAN BANK	5260	12428	4,250	4,350
BANK OF JORDAN	21479	78046	3,600	3,400
MIDDLE EAST INVESTMENT BANK	800	860	1,200	1,200
INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT BANK	44850	116188	2,600	2,480
TERMINAL DEVELOPMENT BANK/NEW	504831	1178285	2,480	2,320
THE HOUSING BANK	15448	73485	4,900	5,000
JORDAN KUNAT BANK	1711	4797	1,830	1,800
JORDAN GULF BANK	3450	3938	1,160	1,140
JORDAN ISLAND BANK	102	1110	3,720	3,680
UNION BANK FOR SAVING & INVESTMENT	250	783	2,820	2,780
JORDAN INVESTMENT & FINANCE BANK	1266	4496	3,620	3,540
ARAB BANK FOR INVESTMENT	19750	12301	940	930
BANKS SECTOR	745064	2231842	INDEX NUMBER: 188.82	CHANGE: -0.91%
JORDAN PERNIX INSURANCE	15650	42605	2,780	2,780
INSURANCE SECTOR	15650	42605	INDEX NUMBER: 131.68	CHANGE: -0.00%
JORDANIAN ELECTRIC POWER	64189	110278	1,730	1,730
JORDAN HOTEL & TOURISM	1230	10782	8,780	8,780
NATIONAL PORTFOLIO SECURITIES	2180	5272	1,870	1,830
REAL ESTATE INVESTMENT	2780	2478	1,010	1,000
JORDAN INTERNATIONAL TRADING CENTER	1000	1090	1,080	1,090
MACHINERY EQUIP. RENTING & MAINTENANCE	1800	1043	7,000	6,700
JORDAN PRESS PUBLICATIONS & MEDIA	1200	7210	10,300	10,200
UNION MIDDLE EAST & CONDOCOR HOTELS	1800	1224	1,820	1,760
ARAB INTER. FOR INVESTMENT & EDUCATION	1388	4479	3,290	3,290
JORDANIAN EXPATRIATES INVESTMENT HOLDING	200	228	1,090	1,140
SARFA PRIVATE UNIVERSITY	3600	4273	1,200	1,180
UNIFIED CO. FOR ORGANIZING LAND TRANS.	150	346	2,220	2,280
UNION LAND DEVELOPMENT CORP.	2130	22210	1,040	1,030
SERVICES SECTOR	107957	183624	INDEX NUMBER: 129.79	CHANGE: -0.19%
THE JORDAN CEMENT FACTORIES	5528	20121	3,600	3,670
JORDAN PHOSPHATE MINES	16697	52627	3,150	3,200
THE ARAB STEELWORKS	2960	15071	5,700	5,140
JORDAN STEELWORKS REFINERY	12046	123443	10,330	10,230
THE JORDAN WASTE MILLS	1550	12400	8,110	8,000
ARAB PHARMACEUTICAL MANUFACTURING	2974	18209	4,660	4,850
JORDAN DAIRY	351	392	2,550	2,180
RAJIA INDUSTRIES	1500	2640	3,250	3,180
DAR AL DAWA DEVELOPMENT & INVESTMENT	2700	20689	7,400	7,700
ARAB ALUMINUM INDUSTRIES	3500	12448	5,420	5,300
LIVESTOCK	43900	26378	1,620	1,510
ARAB PAPER CONVERTING & TRADING	16150	22948	1,440	1,440
NATIONAL STEEL INDUSTRIES	34550	62190	1,820	1,800
NATIONAL INDUSTRIES	3507	8662	1,080	1,020
INTERNATIONAL PETRO-CHEMICAL INDUSTRIES	1250	2168	1,820	1,760
UNION CHEMICAL INDUSTRIES	2450	10888	2,190	2,250
JORDAN SULPHUR-CHEMICALS	150	189	1,290	1,260
UNIVERSAL MODERN INDUSTRIES	54850	175952	2,150	2,300
JORDAN INDUSTRIAL ENGINEERING CO.	12450	41443	2,020	1,950
JORDAN NEW CABLE COMPANY	15050	32173	1,540	1,460
PT-KAY RAYAN WEAR MANUFACTURING CO.	4850	10072	2,240	2,160
INTERNATIONAL TOBACCO & CIGARETTES	24036	19411	1,420	1,390
UNION CHEMICAL & VEGETABLE OIL INDUSTRY	4450	10287	1,640	1,590
INDUSTRIAL SECTOR	266061	675479	INDEX NUMBER: 126.32	CHANGE: -0.49%
GRAND TOTAL	1184752	3134630	INDEX NUMBER: 158.03	CHANGE: -0.71%
NO. OF JORDANIAN SHARES IN PARALLEL MARKET : 278920				
VALUE TRADED IN PARALLEL MARKET : 266109				

Financial Markets

Jordan Times in co-operation with Cairo Amman Bank

U.S. Dollar in International Markets

Currency	New York Close 15/12/95	Tokyo Close 18/12/95
Sterling Pound	1.5365	1.5280**
Deutsche Mark	1.4433	1.4396
Swiss Franc	1.1634	1.1611**
French Franc	4.9655	4.9520**
Japanese Yen	108.82	101.87
European Currency Unit	1.2733	1.2775**

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Steffi Graf cleared of tax fraud

BONN (AFP) — Steffi Graf will not be pursued on tax fraud charges, as investigators are now convinced she knew nothing of her father's tax affairs, Der Spiegel claimed in its latest edition to be published Monday.

The German tennis star, whose father Peter Graf has been detained since August following irregularities in her tax affairs, has twice been interviewed by investigators. But the weekly news magazine said they now believe Peter Graf kept his daughter in the dark about the full extent of her fortune.

Quoting an interview with



Security guards keep a close eye on Steffi Graf at a tournament earlier this year. Graf has reportedly earned \$128 million in her career (file photo)

tax officials, the magazine published the tennis player's reply to the question "Did you ever ask your father about the extent of your personal fortune?"

She said: "I only remember a conversation we had about two three years ago, when he said it was 18 million

marks (\$12.3 million). I thought that didn't sound like a huge amount, but it didn't bother me."

However Der Spiegel claimed that her actual earnings at that time were more like 80 million marks (\$57.5 million) to 120 million marks (\$86 million).

The magazine estimated her total career earnings since 1982 to be 180 million (\$128 million), and her tax and interest payments since 1984 to be 25.5 million marks (\$17.5 million).

An application for bail made by Peter Graf's lawyers is to be heard on Wednesday.

Afghanistan accepts Atlanta invitation

LAUSANNE (AFP) — Afghanistan's National Olympic Committee has accepted the International Olympic Committee's (IOC's) invitation to compete in next summer's XXVth Olympic Games in Atlanta.

An IOC statement Monday put Afghanistan's late reply down to "communication problems." The IOC had originally fixed a November 19 deadline for accepting the invite.

Only North Korea of the 197 National Olympic Committees affiliated to the IOC has yet to reply.

SPORTS IN BRIEF

Boli bound for Japan

MONACO (AFP) — AS Monaco defender Basile Boli has signed a two-year contract with Japanese J-League side Urawa Red Diamonds, his club said Monday. No fee was mentioned for the 29-year-old former Glasgow Rangers man, who scored the goal which won the European Cup for Olympique Marseille in 1993. The player, who has more than 45 full French caps, only arrived at Monaco last summer.

Le Saux out with triple injury

LONDON (R) — Graeme Le Saux's chances of playing in next summer's European Championship finals looked bleak on Monday after his agent said he had suffered a triple injury to his right leg. The England defender was in hospital after being carried off during Blackburn's 1-0 victory over Middlesbrough at Ewood Park on Saturday where he landed awkwardly while making a challenge on Brazilian Juninho. His agent Jonathon Holmes confirmed on Monday that the player had broken his tibia, dislocated his ankle and torn a tendon in his right leg. England coach Terry Venables, speaking in Birmingham after Sunday's European championship draw, admitted his plans for the competition had been upset by the injury to Le Saux. "Losing Graeme is a big blow for us. We've missed him being out of the team for the last two games through injury and I thought he was just about getting himself right," Venables said.

Women's pole vault record improves

PERTH (AP) — Emma George of Australia bettered her own women's world pole vault world record Sunday night, clearing 4.28 metres (14 foot-1/2 inch) at an invitation track and field meet. George, 21, failed in three subsequent efforts at 4.41 metres (14 foot 5-1/2). The previous mark of 4.25 metres (13 foot 11-1/4) was set by George in Melbourne late last month. George has previously competed as a sprinter and long jumper and only switched to the pole vault a year ago. The event will not be contested at the Atlanta Olympics but will be on the programme for the 1997 World Indoor Championships, and will be considered for inclusion in the Sydney 2000 Olympic Games.

Pirates given easy draw

JOHANNESBURG (R) — Newly crowned African club champions Orlando Pirates have been handed an easy draw in defence of their title next year. The South Africans won the continent's top club prize on Saturday with a 1-0 victory (3-2 aggregate) against Asec Abidjan in the Ivorian capital. Pirates, the first sub-Saharan team to win the Champions Cup in 12 years, will open their defence next March against the winner of the preliminary round tie between Majantja of Lesotho and St. Denis, from the island of Reunion.

Tulio rides his luck, Pele's dreams shattered

RIO DE JANEIRO (R) — Brazil's irrepressible striker Tulio has scored more than 50 goals this year for club and country. Most of them have been legitimate, some of them have been superb but the two most important ones have been engulfed in controversy.

When Tulio scored in the 80th minute in Brazil's Copa America quarter-final against Argentina in July, he salvaged a draw they had looked unlikely to get and infuriated the entire Argentine nation. Tulio appeared to control the ball with his arm before scoring, leading Argentine President Carlos Menem to complain of "armed robbery" as Brazil went on to win the penalty shootout.

On Sunday, Tulio pulled it out of the bag again and this time won his club Botafogo the Brazilian championship. Tulio, who finished as the competition's top scorer for the third time with his tally of 23, did not use his hand but did appear to be in an offside position when he scored a typically opportunistic goal that turned out to be the decider.

Santos players complained bitterly afterwards, just as Argentina's had in July, but Tulio was unrepentant. "I'm not going to teach people my secrets for scoring," he said.

The match capped a remarkable year for Tulio who had already outscored Romario in the Rio de Janeiro championship, hitting the back of the net 27 times, with seven goals for his country this year.

Botafogo's triumph had looked extremely improbable when the competition began just four months ago. The players had threatened to go on strike over unpaid wages and there were reports of resentment among other players over the amount of attention given to Tulio.

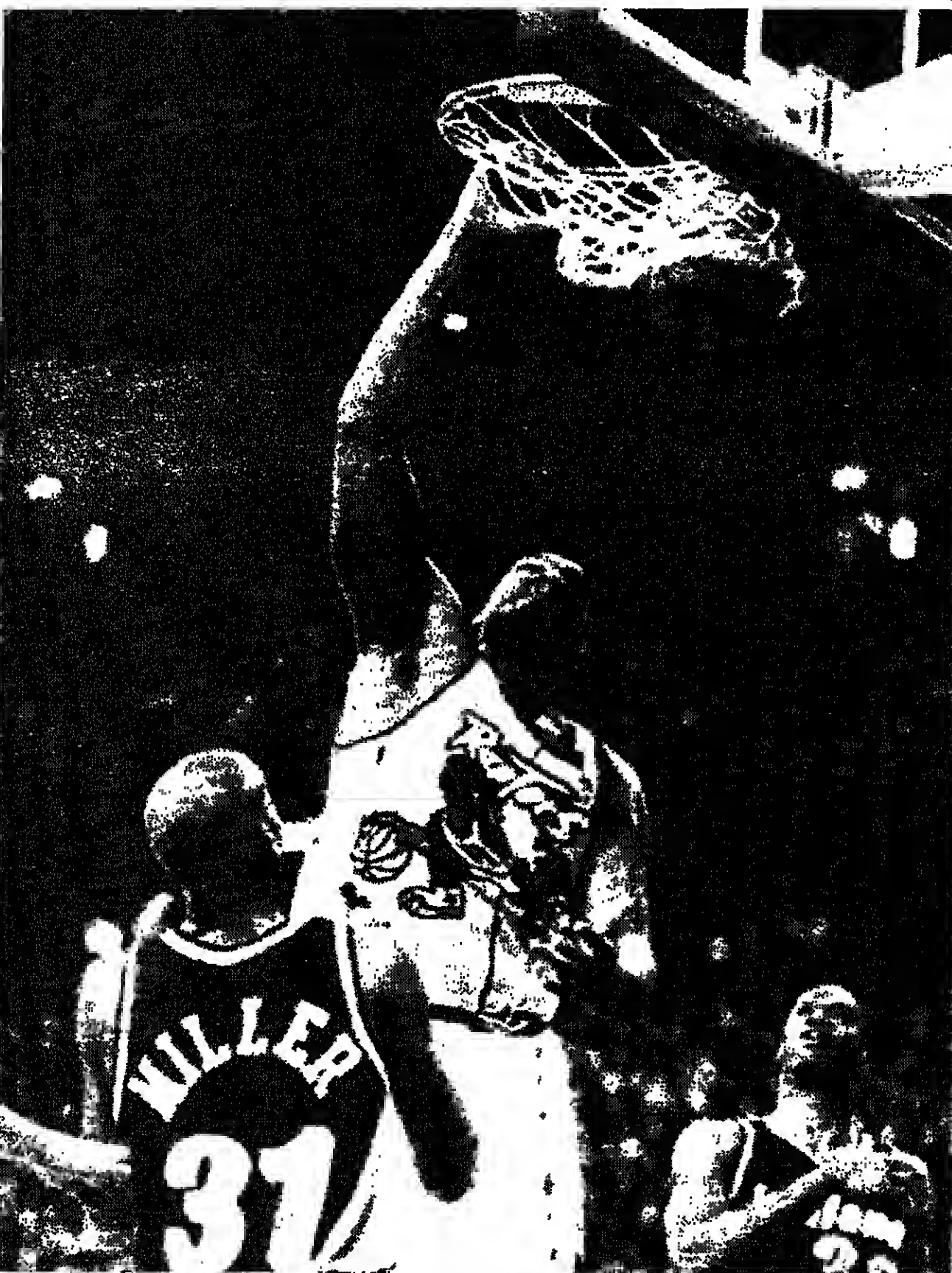
Coach Paulo Autuori, who returned to Brazil after nine years spent coaching Portuguese clubs, was regarded as an unknown but on Sunday was praised by club president Carlos Montenegro for pulling the squad together.

"When he arrived, nobody knew him. Now, he can go out in the street and say 'I am Paulo Autuori', Montenegro said.

Botafogo wrecked the dreams of Pele, who had played an active behind-the-scenes role as his beloved Santos rose from the wilderness this year to reach the final with his son Edinho playing in goal.

Pele, who turned Santos into one of the world's great clubs when he played for them, had seen them slip into decline since leaving in 1973. They had not won any trophy since 1984.

Last year, Pele led a movement to depose Miguel Kodjane as club president and since then has been influential in the club's new policy of investing in promising young players and selling expensive ones.



Toronto Raptors' centre Oliver Miller (centre) slams in a basket in front of Indiana Pacers' guard Reggie Miller (left) and Antonio Davis (right) during first half NBA action in Toronto (Reuters photo)

Raptors score surprising win over Magic

TORONTO (R) — Damon Stoudamire scored 21 points and Alvin Robertson added 20 as the expansion Toronto Raptors thoroughly outplayed the powerful Orlando Magic for a 110-93 victory on Sunday.

Tracy Murray added nine to his 16 points in a decisive 24-5 first-half burst to help the Raptors end a three-game losing streak and beat a team with a winning record for only the second time.

"They beat us in every phase of the game tonight," Magic coach Brian Hill said. "Offensive execution, defensive intensity, they got to the line more. They were by far the better team tonight."

Shaquille O'Neal, playing just his second game of the season, scored 32 points and Penny Hardaway added 18 to pace the Magic attack.

Stoudamire's basket with 38 seconds left in the first quarter sparked the key 24-5 run over the next six minutes.

"Damon played 45 minutes. He was as fresh in the 45th minute as in the first," said Raptors coach Brendan Malone.

Toronto opened its largest lead at 34-16 entering the final period and the

Magic got no closer than the final margin.

In Milwaukee, Lee Mayberry and Terry Cummings came off the bench to score 16 and 15 points, respectively, as the Bucks atoned for a Friday blowout with an 84-80 victory over the Indiana Pacers.

The Bucks snapped a three-game losing streak and avenged Friday's 112-95 loss to Indiana in the opener of a home-and-home series.

"Obviously, this was our best defensive effort of the year," Bucks coach Mike Dunleavy said. "It was a situation where we were embarrassed by a team on Friday and came back tonight against the same team for a win."

Reggie Miller scored 17 points and Mark Jackson added 16 for Indiana, which saw a four-game winning streak end.

In Cleveland, Dan Majerle

and Terrell Braddon each scored 20 points as the Cavaliers reached the .500 mark for the first time this season with a 92-79 victory over the undermanned Denver Nuggets.

Brandon had just six points after three quarters but scored 14 of Cleveland's final 19 points.

The Cavaliers have won four of their last five games and 11 of 15 since opening the season 0-7.

Don MacLean scored 26 points for the injury-plagued Nuggets, who suited up just eight players.

The Nuggets missed their first 13 three-point attempts. At Minnesota, Vernon Maxwell scored 30 points and Clarence Weatherspoon added 22 points and 11 rebounds as the Philadelphia 76ers beat the Timberwolves 101-99 for their first road win of the season.

Philadelphia, which lost 15

of its previous 16 games, had been outscored by an average of 17.3 points per game in their first nine road losses.

Maxwell was 5-of-9 from three-point range and added 10 assists, while Scott Skiles added a season-high 22 points, including six three-pointers, as the Sixers tied a franchise record with 13 long baskets.

Christian Laettner led the T-Wolves with 23 points and 11 rebounds.

In Portland, Calbert Cheaney scored 25 points and Gheorghe Muresan contributed 18 and 17 rebounds as the Washington Bullets ran their winning streak to five with a 112-100 victory over the Trail Blazers.

The Bullets improved to 11-10 to get over the .500 mark for the first time since November of 1994.

Chris Webber and Juwan Howard added 19 points apiece and Robert Pack had 12 points and 14 assists for the Bullets.

Portland was led by Clifford Robinson, who scored 24 points after being benched for the entire first quarter, and Arvydas Sabonis, who chipped in 20.

RESULTS

Toronto	110	Orlando	93
Philadelphia	101	Minnesota	99
Milwaukee	84	Indiana	80
Cleveland	92	Denver	79
Washington	112	Portland	100

Tyson, Bruno await March 16 bout

PHILADELPHIA (R) — The hype for the Mike Tyson-Frank Bruno title fight in March officially began on Sunday with Bruno trotting out a Britain versus United States theme.

Bruno appeared to be chomping at the bit to fight Tyson, especially after seeing what the Briton said was much rust in Tyson's performance on Saturday when the former champion, his timing way off, finally knocked out Buster Mathis Jr. in the third round.

"I'm going to fly the flag for England, I'm an ambassador for boxing," said Bruno who was stopped by Tyson in the fifth round in 1989.

"I'm a different man from before. I'm mentally better. You'll see on March 16th," said Bruno, the World Boxing Council champion.

Tyson "looked a bit rusty here and there. I'm not going to get involved in a slugging match. These are going to be my judges," said Bruno, holding up his fists.

In response to a question, Bruno said he saw "quite a few (mistakes on Tyson's part on Saturday), but I'm not going to talk about it."

"We'll find out March 16th how rusty I am," Tyson said. "This is going to be great. I'm looking forward to it."

Bruno praised Tyson and then stuck a verbal knife into him, as Bruno had done earlier this week to other two heavyweight champions.

"I have the utmost respect for Tyson, but when I get in the ring I won't have one ounce of respect," said Bruno, who went on to heap praise on himself for being such a good ambassador for boxing, citing his large following of fans in Britain, especially children.

Bruno praised Tyson for emerging from prison last March, after three years on a conviction for rape, with a belief in the Muslim faith.

But Bruno criticised the people surrounding the former undisputed heavyweight champion, saying, "it's ridiculous, the guys he has around him ... shouting, doing all kinds of things."

Bruno was referring to the small army of people always around Tyson and one particularly loud-mouthed camp follower who shouts innane remarks, such as "wake up, wake up it's fight time," in the middle of the day, whenever there are more than a handful of people present.

Atletico stay top with last-minute victory

MADRID (AP) — Jose Luis Caminero scored with two minutes remaining Sunday, breaking a scoreless duel and giving Atletico Madrid a 1-0 victory at Valencia to remain atop the Spanish League by two points.

Caminero's goal came despite the ejection of Atletico defender Delfi Geli just a minutes before for a hard tackle.

Argentine striker Leonardo Angel Biagini beat his defender down the right side, stopped and sent a sharp cross onto the left foot of the streaking Caminero.

Keeper Andoni Zubizarreta, who had stopped several shots earlier, dove but was beaten by Caminero, who scored his third of the season after being badly shaken up in the first half on a narrowly missed header.

For Atletico (12-3-2), the victory was another response to its critics who have been predicting the club's demise all season. After trouncing Barcelona at home last week, Sunday's victory at 8-3-6 Valencia showed the club can win on the road, where both of its losses have come.

RCD Espanyol kept pace with Atletico, beating Oviedo 2-1 to improve to 11-4-2 and remain in second. Compostela likewise stayed with Atletico, beating Racing 2-0 to remain in fourth six points back.

Barcelona beat sporting Gijon 1-0 on Saturday to remain in fourth, two behind Espanyol and two ahead of Compostela. Betis lost some ground in a 1-1 draw with cross-town rival Sevilla on Saturday.

Elsewhere Sunday, it was Albacete 3, Tenerife 1; Salamanca 3, Real Sociedad 3; Real Madrid 1, Celta 0; Deportivo La Coruna 6, Rayo Vallecano 0; Zaragoza 5, Valladolid 3; and Athletic Bilbao 1, Merida 1.

Espanyol 2, Oviedo 1; At Oviedo, Yugoslavian midfielder Goran Bogdanovic scored with six minutes remaining to give Espanyol its third victory in four road games.

Florin Raducioiu gave Espanyol the lead in the 28 minute but Carlos Munoz tied the game for Oviedo (5-5-7) just before halftime off a feed from Slovakian Petr Dubovsky.

Real Madrid 1, Celta 0: At Madrid, 19-year-old Alvaro Villar scored his first Spanish first-division goal with a spinning move at the top of the penalty area in the 32nd minute to give Real its eighth victory of the season (8-4-5).

Recent acquisition Dejan Petkovic from Yugoslavia had to make up for the absence of Chilean striker Ivan Zamorano, still nursing a groin pull, and Danish midfielder Michael Laudrup.

Atletico 1, Merida 1: At Bilbao, Aitor Larrazabal converted an 84th minute penalty to move Athletic (6-5-6) in to 10th place ahead of Tenerife. Brazilian striker Sinval had given Merida (3-7-7) the lead in the 62nd.

Compostela 2, Racing Santander 0: At Compostela, Francisco Javier Villena and Nigerian Christopher Ohen both scored in the final two minutes to give Compostela its 10th victory of the season, one less than it finished with all last season. For Ohen it was his eighth goal of the season.

Salamanca 3, Real Sociedad 3: At Salamanca, Estonian Valeri Karpin and Oscar de Paula rallied Sociedad from a 3-1 deficit with second-half goals. Joan Barba's sixth goal of the season, Ovidiu Stinga's fourth and another by Miguel Torrecilla jumped Salamanca (4-6-7) out to the 3-1 advantage by the 31st minute.

Karpin scored one in the 17th to try to keep Sociedad (5-4-8) close, drew it closer with his seventh of the year in the 59th before De Paula tied the game 10 minutes later.

Zaragoza 5, Valladolid 3: At Zaragoza, Argentine international Sebastian Rambert scored in the 36th and 42nd minutes to make a successful Spanish debut and give Zaragoza its first victory at home in six games. Uruguayan midfielder Gustavo Poyet added two of his own in the second half for Zaragoza.

An own goal by Ivan Campo in the 16th, plus Rambert's pair got Zaragoza (6-4-7) out to a 3-0 lead before Valladolid responded just before the end of the first half on Croatian striker Alen Peternac's sixth of the season.

Valladolid lost its ninth of the season and remained in last place in the 22-team First Division with a 2-6-9 record and 12 points.

Albacete 3, Tenerife 1: In the Canary Islands, Croatian midfielder Nenad Bjelic scored his fifth and sixth goals of the season to lead Albacete to only its fourth victory of the season (4-4-9).

Antonio Pinilla gave Tenerife the lead in the 22nd minute before Bjelic put Albacete ahead with goals in the 27th and 61st minutes.

Deportivo 6, Rayo Vallecano 0: In Madrid, six different players scored for Deportivo, including Bebeto with his league leading 13th, and Donato as La Coruna won its seventh (7-3-7).

The loss was a league-worst 11th for Rayo (4-2-11), which stayed two points ahead of Valladolid.

Tunisia's Etoile looking to sparkle

JOHANNESBURG (AFP) — Tunisian club Etoile du Sahel will begin their defence of the African Football Confederation Cup with a match against modest Entente Sottac-Ouakam in Senegal.

Etoile followed in the footsteps of Nigeria Shooting Stars and Bendel Insurance and Stella Adujan of the Ivory Coast this month by lifting a trophy named after jailed Nigerian politician Moshood Abiola.

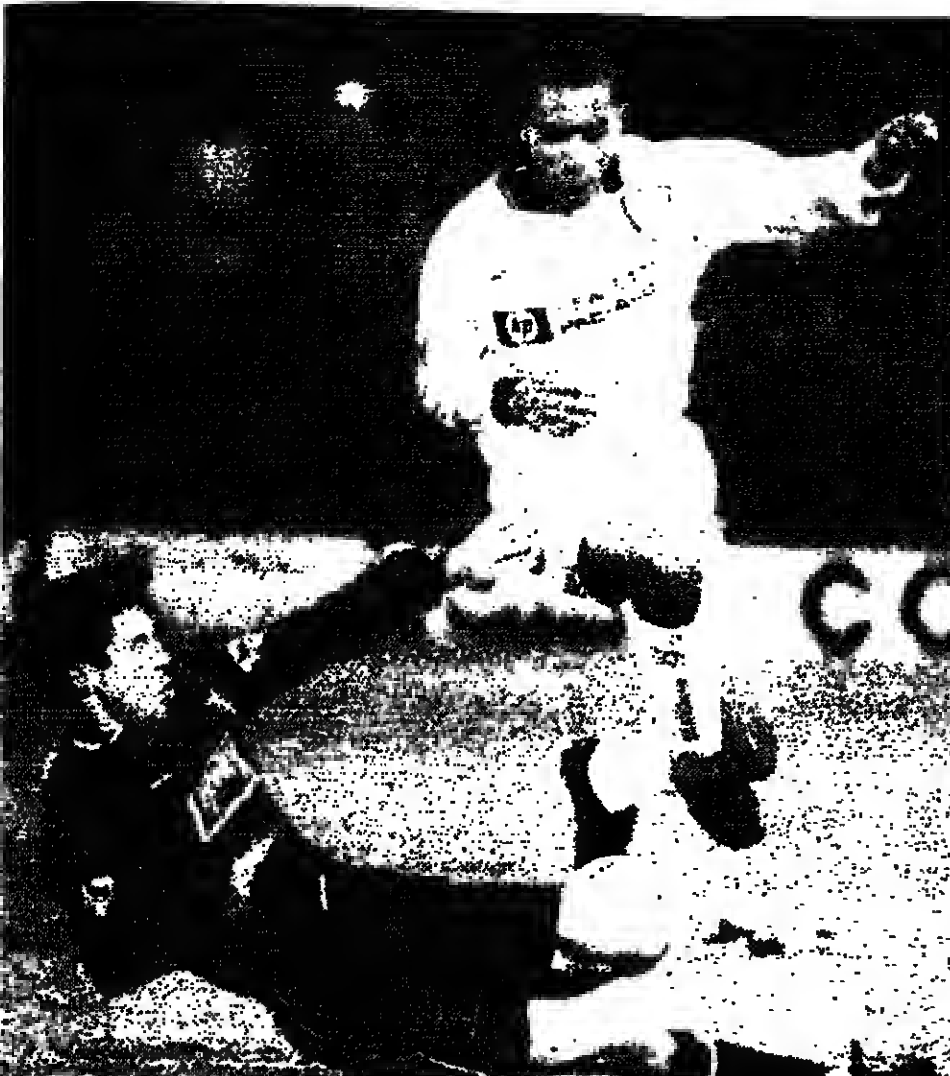
The first leg of the decider against Kaloum Stars in Guinea finished goalless and two first-half goals from rising star Imed Ben Younes in Sousse ensured victory for the red-shirted local club.

Now Etoile must try and end a jinx which has seen Stars and Bendel fall at the first hurdle in defence of the title while Stella never even got a chance because Ivorian clubs were barred due to crowd violence.

Young playmaker Zoubeyr Beya will be a key figure for the Tunisians, who have a Brazilian coach and a squad that includes several players from the South American country and one from Russia.

Senegal have been missing from Africa for several years because of financial problems.

After shunning the competition for national championship runners-up since its inception in 1992, Morocco have entered Kawkeb Marakech, who confront National Guard of Mauritania.



Tottenham's Chris Armstrong leaps over Wimbledon defender Kenny Cunningham during their premiership match at Selhurst Park (AFP photo)

Fowler double leaves United reeling

LIVERPOOL (AFP) — Two superbly taken goals by Liverpool's brilliant young striker Robbie Fowler dealt arch-rivals Manchester United's title hopes a major blow in a pulsating encounter at Anfield on Sunday.

Fowler struck at the end of each half to leave second-placed United trailing Newcastle — who beat Everton 1-0 on Saturday — by seven points going into the hectic Christmas programme.

Liverpool, whose run of poor form ended with a 1-0 victory at Bolton last week, dominated an explosive match from the outset but were denied an early breakthrough by some inspirational saves from United's goalkeeper Peter Schmeichel.

Danish star Schmeichel, returning to the side after an elbow operation, kept United in the game with a string of top class saves as Liverpool poured forward in the first half.

But there was little he could do to deny Fowler his first goal in six games on the stroke of half-time when the England 'B' striker curled in a brilliant free-kick that left the Great Dane rooted to the goal-line as the ball whistled into his top right corner.

The goal was no more than Liverpool deserved as their fluent passing, imaginative running and greater tenacity in the tackle left United floundering.

"We were dreadful, absolutely dreadful in the first half," admitted United boss Alex Ferguson.

United made a better fist of it in the second-half but their inability to break down a composed Liverpool defence forced Ferguson to take off seven million pound striker Andy Cole and send on the inexperienced Paul Scholes.

The match ebbed and flowed with chances coming at both ends. Eric Cantona forcing a smart save out of Liverpool's David James at one end and Collymore crashing a vicious shot against the cross bar at the other.

But three minutes from time Fowler sealed the three points for the Reds, who move up to fifth, when he cut inside in the defence on the edge of the box and buried a low shot into a Schmeichel's left-hand corner.

Ferguson added later: "I think, particularly in the first half, that that was the most lifeless performance I've seen from us."

Thailand tops SEA Games table

CHIANG MAI (AP) — Already master of the 18th Asian Games, Thailand scored a final knockout on the closing day as its boxers put away opponents in 11 out of 12 final bouts.

Traditional Thai hospitality did not extend to the sports arenas here, as the insatiable hosts dethroned regional power Indonesia and demolished opponents in sporting ranging from athletics to yachting.

After nine days of competition, the climactic boxing wins propelled the final Thai gold count to 157, with Indonesia left far behind at 76. The Philippines was third ranked with 33 trailed by Malaysia with 31.

Singapore is taking home 26, Vietnam 10 and Burma five. There were no golds to go around for Brunei, Cambodia or Laos.

Also on the final day, Singapore emerged winners in men's water polo and the equestrian team three-day event. A Thai rider took the individual three-day competition, and the Thai sepak takraw team downed Singapore for gold in the regu event.

A closing ceremony in the main stadium was to feature 12,000 performers, a final gathering of the 3,200 athletes and a repeat of the spectacular fireworks display with which the games began.

The biggest sports event ever held in Southeast Asia, the Chiang Mai games were the seventh won by the Thais but only the second since Indonesia joined the grouping in 1977.

Indonesia's downfall was generally ascribed to a young, relatively inexperienced team, the Thai hometown advantage, and the excellent preparations of the winners.

The Indonesians have also had trouble matching the Thai team's depth. The hosts have entered 640 athletes here, nearly 120 more than Indonesia's contingent.



Jacksonville Jaguars' Mickey Washington (right) grabs hold of Detroit Lions' Barry Sanders as Sanders runs for 5 yards in the second quarter of their NFL game at the Silverdome. Detroit beat Jacksonville 44-0 (Reuters photo)

Bills win battle for AFC East

BUFFALO (AFP) — The Buffalo Bills, who failed to make the National Football League playoffs last season after four straight futile trips to the Super Bowl, beat Miami 23-20 Sunday to win the American Conference East division.

Linebacker David White's interception set up Steve Christie's 25-yard field goal with barely more than six minutes left as the Bills won the AFC East title for the sixth time in eight years.

Thurman Thomas rushed for 148 yards and scored two touchdowns. The Bills are 41-2 during the regular season when Thomas runs for more than 100 yards.

"When he runs like that, it filters over to the line," said centre Kent Hull. "We block better. It makes our job awfully easy."

Miami's Dan Marino passed for 254 yards and a touchdown for Miami, but couldn't fend off a fourth loss in five road games.

Miami took advantage of a pair of turnovers to score 10 points in less than two minutes early in the third quarter.

Steve Emtman recovered Thomas' fumble at the Buffalo 33 to set up Pete Stoyanovich's 30-yard field goal and Marino connected with Eric Green for a 25-yard touchdown one play after Calvin Jackson returned an interception 23 yards.

The Bills regained the lead just before the third quarter ended on an 11-yard scoring toss from Jim Kelly to Thomas.

Kelly completed 16-of-28 passes for 139 yards, while Marino was 18-for-28 for 254 yards. The Dolphins were held to 42 rushing yards after

gaining 148 against Buffalo on October 29th. Marino also was sacked three times.

"We knew if we could stop the run, we could get after Dan," said Bills linebacker Bryce Paup. "We gave them a few new wrinkles."

At Dallas, the Cowboys posted a last-gasp 21-20 victory over the New York Giants as Chris Boniol kicked a 35-yard field goal as time expired.

It was Boniol's fifth field goal of the game and he welcomed the chance to show his mettle.

"I've been wanting one of these games," he said. "A five-for-five where you hit a game-winner, I was glad to finally get this chance."

Boniol's winning kick capped a 14-play, 58-yard drive which featured three third down conversions on pass completions by Troy Aikman.

"There was never a doubt, but," he said, "I had them all the way," said a relieved Cowboys coach Barry Switzer. "It was a real gut check."

The victory kept the Cowboys in sole possession of first-place in the National Conference East, one game ahead of Philadelphia.

Dallas had already earned a playoff berth, and can still earn home-field advantage throughout the playoffs if San Francisco loses one of its next two games and the Cowboys win their season finale at Arizona.

The near-miss was no joke to Aikman, who admitted the Cowboys would have to improve to stay on course for the Super Bowl.

"We're going to have to do a lot better than this if we're going to get very far," he said.

The loss overshadowed a season-high 187-yard rushing performance by New York's Rodney Hampton, who passed the 1,000-yard rushing mark for the fifth straight year. Hampton carried the ball 34 times.

The Cowboys' NFC rivals San Francisco hosted Minnesota on Monday night.

Last season's AFC champions San Diego kept their playoff hopes alive with a 27-24 victory over Indianapolis, and the Seattle Seahawks kept the race open further

with a 44-10 blowout over Oakland.

In other games, Carolina beat Atlanta 21-17, while the Panther's fellow expansion team Jacksonville took a 44-0 pounding from Detroit that kept the Lions in the playoff hunt.

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Jordan beats India 6-3 in polo match

By Munem Fakhoury

Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Jordan's national polo team Monday beat the Delhi Polo Club of India 6-3 in the friendly match held at Zarqa Polo Club field.

His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan led the Jordanian team to victory as he scored the first goal in the first minute of the first chukker which ended with Jordan leading 2-0. Jordan has another scoring chance as Anmar Hmoud led a counter-attack in the 6th minute when he passed the ball to Prince Hassan who nearly scored.

With less than a minute remaining, referee Mohammad Samman of Jordan awarded a foul against the guest team as Hmoud executed the shot to score the second goal for Jordan.

The second chukker showed Jordan's determination to attack from the onset and in the second minute Hmoud passed the ball to Prince Hassan who in turn passed it to teammate Zeid Vazir Rasheed who scored to give Jordan a 3-0 lead.

A minute later, Prince Hassan passed the ball to Abdul Halim Hmoud who



HRH Prince Rashed Ben Al Hassan joins match against the Delhi Polo Club (Photo by Jordan's national polo team in a friendly Yousef Shehadeh)

rushed the field in a solo attempt to score the fourth goal.

In the fourth minute of the chukker, the referee awarded the Indian team a foul, which was executed by Angad Kilan who scored his team's first goal.

Jordan led 4-1 at the beginning of the third chukker. The Kingdom's Abdul Halim Hmoud made it 5-1 for Jordan from the first minute followed immediately by the sixth goal a minute later

when Hmoud executed a foul which was converted into Jordan's sixth goal by His Royal Highness Prince Rashed Ben Al Hassan.

Two minutes before the end of the third chukker Kilan scored his team's second goal ending the chukker 6-2.

The Indian team pressed hard in the fourth and final chukker as Jasit Singh succeeded in scoring his team's third goal to end the match 6-3 for Jordan.

Polo Club Director Major-General Mahmoud Fahhad presented the winner's trophy to Jordan's team captain Prince Hassan and awarded commemorative trophies to the guest team and members of Jordan's team.

The match was the third between Indian and Jordanian polo teams. The Indian Army Team first played in Jordan in 1982 when Jordan won and in 1985 Jordan's team visited India where they lost to their hosts.

Both vulnerable South deals.

NORTH
♠ 9 8 6
♥ 7 8
♦ Q J 7 4
♣ Q 10 9 6 3

WEST
♠ A 7 4
♥ A J 9 5 3 2
♦ 9 8 6
♣ A 2

EAST
♠ Q J 10 3 2
♥ K Q 7
♦ 5 3 2
♣ J 4

SOUTH
♠ K 5
♥ 10 6 4
♦ A K 10
♣ A K 3 7 5

The bidding:
SOUTH WEST NORTH EAST
16 17 34 37

GOREN BRIDGE

WITH OMAR SHARIF & TANNAN HIRSCH

THERE'S NO JUSTICE

54. Pass Pass Pass Pass

Opening lead: Five of ♣

In a perfect world, everything good would be suitably rewarded. All too often, unfortunately, virtue has to be its own reward. This deal is from a world championship match between France and Israel.

For Israel, South judged well to bid five clubs. Marked by the auction with a singleton heart at most, all North's assets had to be worked

ing, and the queens of spades and diamonds would be enough to guarantee the contract.

Had West made the routine lead of the ace of hearts, the defense would have been held to two tricks since one of declarer's spades would go away on the fourth diamond. But West found the brilliant underlead of the ace of hearts, taken by East's queen. After some thought East

chose to shift to the queen of spades, and the defenders took two tricks in that suit for a one-trick set.

East-West had every right to expect an excellent result on the board. In the other room, however, the French South elected to open one no trump, and that became the final contract when West decided not to interpose because of the rascals of the heart suit.

The play to the first two tricks was the same as in the other room. West led a low heart to East's queen, and back came the queen of spades. That defense allowed the East-West to collect the first 11 tricks for a five-trick set, and the French lost 400 points on the deal.

CINEMA TEL: 634144	CINEMA TEL: 699238	CINEMA TEL: 677420	AMMOUN THEATRE TEL: 618274 - 618275		Nabil & Hisham's Theatre TEL: 625155
			Shows begin on Dec. 19, 1995 and continue on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays (three days a week) only. The programme continues until the start of the holy month of Ramadan. The Show is entitled: "Ahlan Tatbie" Welcome Normalisation For reservation call 625155		
PHILADELPHIA	PLAZA	CONCORD	MUSA HIAZIN "Sumaa" in Hi Citizen daily at 8:30 p.m. Written & directed by Mohammad Shawaqfeh		
Around the world at the same time....presents GOLDENEYE Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:05, 8:30, 10:30	Presents..Walt Disney's The Santa*Clause Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 5, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30	CONCORD "1" Jacque Nicklson & Michel Feiffer....in WOLF Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6, 8:15, 10:30 CONCORD "2" Sylvester Stallone..in ASSASSINS Shows: 3:30, 6, 8:15, 10:15			

Israel 'clarifies' stand on Jordanian property

By P.V. Vivekanand
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Israel has explained to Jordan that the issue of Jordanian-owned property in the occupied territories could be discussed only in the context of the broader negotiations on the status of refugees and cannot be addressed on a bilateral level, the Israeli ambassador to Jordan said Monday.

Ambassador Shimon Shamir also said the draft of the much-delayed transport agreement between Jordan and Israel is ready for signature, but the signing of the document is being delayed because of technical hitches in a separate but related accord on air services.

Mr. Shamir said the Jordanian government had approached the Israeli government to address the issue of property owned by Jordanians but which remain under Israeli control after the Jewish state occupied the West Bank, including Arab East Jerusalem, in the 1967 war.

The issue is an irritant for many Jordanians who argue that there is no reason for Israel to deny the property rights of Jordanians after Jordan and Israel signed a peace treaty in October 1994.

However, Ambassador Shamir said Israel had "clarified" to the Jordanian government that its interpretation of the peace treaty in this context is that from the day

the treaty was signed Jordanians were removed from the list of "citizens of enemy countries," clearing the way for them to own property in areas controlled by Israel.

"But the treaty is not retroactive," according to Israel's interpretation as explained by the ambassador. As such, "controversial law on absentee property" applies to all Jordanian property that went under Israeli control in 1967. In practical terms, this means that the issue would have to be dealt within the framework of Israeli-Palestinian final status negotiations scheduled to begin in May 1996.

No immediate Jordanian comment was available on the Israeli "clarification."

On the status of bilateral agreements stipulated in the Oct. 26, 1994 peace treaty, Mr. Shamir said four other documents were also ready for signature, but they have to wait until after the transport accord is signed in line with the "order of signing" as stipulated in the treaty.

Mr. Shamir declined to be specific on the differences holding up the air services agreement except to say that they were "technical" and related to "airspace etc." He likewise did not provide a timeframe to the eventual signing of the accord.

According to Jordanian officials, one of the key difference is over the altitude that Israel is willing to allow

Jordanian aircraft to fly at in its airspace.

The transport accord provides for the entry of Jordanian and Israeli vehicles to each other's territory and would launch direct bus and taxi routes between the two countries.

Since the signing of the peace treaty more than one year ago, Jordan and Israel have signed eight agreements on cooperation (tourism, energy, agriculture, security and combating drugs, boundaries, health, the environment and trade).

In addition to the transport accord, which is seen as key to the implementation of some of the already signed agreements, there are other pending accords on science and technology, Aqaba-Eilat maritime borders and telecommunications.

"These four documents are also ready for signing, which could be done in one day in a ceremony after the transport accord is signed," said Mr. Shamir.

When the five accords are signed, the total of 13 accords "will form the infrastructure for close Jordanian-Israeli interaction," said the ambassador.

Mr. Shamir, who took office in mid-1995 as Israel's first ambassador to Jordan, said he expected the second year after the signing of the peace treaty to bring about

(Continued on page 7)



PNA-HAMAS TALKS: Palestinian National Council (PNC) acting Speaker Salim Zannoun (right) shakes hands with Hamas representative Khaled Misbal before starting a meeting in Cairo on Monday on settling some of the differences between Hamas and the Palestinian National Authority (see page one) (AFP photo)

Government is likely to set up special anti-corruption panel

By Lola Keilani
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — To demonstrate Jordan's seriousness in its fight against corruption, the government intends to set-up an anti-corruption commission to implement a national strategy against corruption, informed sources said Monday.

Although the government has not yet formally adopted the strategy, an informed source who on Monday met

with Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker along with foreign experts in the fight against corruption, told the Jordan Times that the commission was expected to be headed by Sharif Zeid.

"The prime minister, who showed extreme interest in cracking down on corruption, seemed willing to head the commission," said the source, who spoke on the condition of anonymity. This step would demonstrate Jordan's political will in its fight

against corruption, according to the source.

Sharif Zeid, in a speech delivered on his behalf by Muhideen Touq, minister of administrative development, at a two-day meeting on corruption this week, reaffirmed the government's commitment to fight corruption at all levels.

During Monday's meeting the prime minister briefed foreign experts who took part in the seminar entitled "Integrity in Government" on

measures already adopted in Jordan to fight corruption and expressed genuine interest in adopting further action, the source said.

Experts from the United Kingdom, Uganda, Singapore, Bolivia, Hong Kong, and the World Bank presented the prime minister with a short report about the outcome of the seminar and topics addressed by the participants.

(Continued on page 7)

Khartoum invites opposition to run for presidency

KHARTOUM (AFP) — Parliamentarians in Sudan, run by a military junta, say a framework bill for next year's presidential and general elections allows any national to campaign for the presidency, local papers reported Monday.

One member of the transitional national assembly, Ibrahim Al Tahir, declared that former premier Sadeq Al Mahdi and southern rebel leader John Garang should run for office, the press reports said.

Mr. Tahir, a legal advisor to junta leader General Omar Al Bashir, who ousted the democratically elected Mahdi in a coup in June 1989, said: "We call upon Sadeq Al Mahdi and John Garang to nominate themselves to the presidency and we will provide them with opportunities to speak to the voters to give their opinion."

He told Sunday's session of the assembly that the only condition for participation in politics would be "citizenship with no consideration of faith or culture."

General Garang's Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) has been at war against successive regimes in Khartoum since 1983 to end domination of the mainly Islamist and Christian south of Sudan, Africa's largest country, by the Islamic Arabised north.

Justice Minister Abdul Aziz Shiddo said the constitutional decree bill sent general Bashir to the assembly for discussion would not bar any Sudanese from nominating himself to the presidency.

"We are not scared of the opposition and we invite them to nominate themselves as opponents of this regime," Mr. Shiddo said, claiming "allegations being raised about Sudan and is a measure of deepening the new democratic experiment being presented by Sudan."

Current parliamentary authorities are largely appointed bodies and the human rights record of the Muslim fundamentalist-backed regime has been criticised internationally. Washington has placed Sudan on its blacklist of countries accused of sponsoring state terrorism.

Mr. Shiddo said the bill was a basis for the country's permanent constitution. Meanwhile, the president of the elections board, Abul Monim Al Zein Al Nahas, quoted by Monday's Sudan Al Hadeeth daily, said any Sudanese aged 40 or over could run for the presidency on condition that he is nominated by 20 persons and had not been convicted of any major offence.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Pakistan appoints new army chief

ISLAMABAD (AFP) — Lieutenant General Jehangir Karamat has been appointed new chief of the Pakistani army, the official Associated Press of Pakistan reported Monday. He will replace General Abdul Waheed who is due to retire next month after a three-year tenure as chief of the half-a-million strong army. The appointment ends speculation as to whether Gen. Waheed would get an extension or otherwise who would succeed him. Gen. Waheed is credited with having kept the army aloof from politics in Pakistan, which has spent more than half of its 49-years since independence under military rule. An army chief is generally considered here as part of a de facto troika along with the president and prime minister.

Gonzalez to stand again for premier

MADRID (AFP) — Spanish Prime Minister Felipe Gonzalez ended weeks of speculation on Monday by saying he would head the Socialist Party into parliamentary elections he called for next March. The Socialist Party executive announced it would propose Mr. Gonzalez to head the party's list in the poll. The party candidate will be officially designated by the party's federal committee on Friday, but Mr. Gonzalez was assured of a large majority. Mr. Gonzalez, who became prime minister in 1982, will be leading his party into legislative elections for the seventh consecutive time.

Allies divert dhow carrying Iraqi dates

DUBAI (AFP) — U.S. and allied ships in the Gulf have diverted 17 traditional wooden boats suspected of exporting dates from Iraq since November, a U.S. Navy spokesman said Monday. "The dhow were able to carry between 100 to 750 tonnes of dates each," Lieutenant Commander Hal Pittman said. U.S. Navy officials have said the dates are worth about \$500 per tonne or up to five times the price of diesel oil and the use of the dhow appeared to be a new tactic to slip by multinational ships enforcing U.N. sanctions. In the past the Iraqis used large vessels like tankers, cargo ships and tug boats to try to bypass sanctions. Personnel on ships from the multinational maritime interception force — which includes the United States, Britain, Italy, Belgium, Canada and the New Zealand — diverted the dhow to "different countries" in the region. They were to undergo further investigation and are dealt with under the U.N. sanctions and the laws of the country where they are berthed.

S. Arabia, Italy sign security accord

RIYADH (AP) — Saudi Arabia and Italy have signed a security accord to coordinate their efforts in the fight against terrorism, organised crime and drug smuggling. The accord was signed late Saturday by Saudi Arabia's interior minister, Prince Nayef, and his Italian counterpart Rinaldo Ossola. Prince Nayef, quoted by the official Saudi Press Agency late Saturday, said: "The kingdom of Saudi Arabia... rejects being a base or a corridor for terrorism." Mr. Ossola said the accord also provides for the exchange of information and expertise, but gave no further details.

Gunmen attack Turkish candidate's home

DIYARBAKIR (R) — Gunmen opened fire on the home of an Islamist candidate in Turkey's general elections next weekend, injuring his son, police sources said Monday. The assailants attacked Welfare Party (RP) candidate Hasim Hasimi's home in the outskirts of the southeastern city of Diyarbakir on Sunday night before escaping in a taxi, they said. Mr. Hasimi's 17-year-old son was slightly injured. Police said several people had been detained in connection with the incident but gave no details.

U.N. envoy probes religious rights in Iran

TEHRAN (AFP) — A U.N. special envoy on religious rights, Abdul Fattah Amor, held more talks Monday on the situation of minorities in the Islamic Republic of Iran. Mr. Amor, who arrived Friday, met Justice Ministry officials as well as the leaders of religious minorities and representatives of non-governmental organisations (NGOs). Informed sources said, He is expected to travel to the central city of Esfahan on Tuesday and then on to the northwest city of Tabriz, where sizeable Armenian Christian communities live. Mr. Amor, the first U.N. human rights rapporteur to visit Iran in four years, has already met Iran's chief justice, Ayatollah Mohammad Yazdi, and the deputy foreign minister for international affairs, Mohammad Javad Zarif. Iran said earlier this month that it would receive U.N. human rights rapporteurs but warned that any reports must be based on "facts."

Armed resistance is a right, Sfeir asserts

BEIRUT (R) — Lebanon's Maronite patriarch, apparently expressing extreme frustration at the situation of the Christian minority, was quoted on Monday as saying armed resistance could be permissible against political tyranny.

Cardinal Nasrallah Sfeir, who is the last effective independent Christian voice in Lebanon, said in a Sunday sermon citizens must not obey an authority which "breaches moral codes, basic

human rights or the teachings of the Bible."

He then spelled out the conditions in which armed resistance was justifiable.

"Armed resistance against tyranny of the political authority is not legitimate except under the following conditions," Cardinal Sfeir was quoted by newspapers as saying.

The conditions were: "1. When there is definite, severe and continuous violation of basic rights. 2. When all

other measures to improve the situation have been exhausted. 3. When such (armed) resistance does not lead to a worse situation. 4. When there is hope of success. 5. When it is impossible to conceive a better solution."

Cardinal Sfeir did not indicate whether he believed Lebanon's Christians had reached the point legitimate violence, but his statement, five years after the community emerged defeted and di-

vided from Lebanon's 1975-90 civil war, surprised observers.

The Synod of Lebanese Bishops also said the return of peace to Lebanon should mean "a return to strict respect for human rights." It asked the government to stop what the bishops said were arbitrary arrests, and to abolish torture and free political prisoners.

The synod's calls got a cool reception from some Muslim spiritual leaders.

Shin Bet hit hard in Rabin inquiry

TEL AVIV (Agencies) — The inquiry into the killing of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin dealt a blow to the reputation of Israel's secret service on Monday, warning agents they stood to be harmed by its findings.

The justice ministry said warning letters were sent to six top agents in the Shin Bet secret service, including the Shin Bet head, and to an assistant police commander.

Yossi Melman, author of books on Israeli security services, said the announcement was devastating for the Shin Bet, responsible for protecting Mr. Rabin from the Jewish gunman who killed him in Tel Aviv on Nov. 4.

"It's the day of the long knives for the Shin Bet," Mr. Melman, a correspondent for the newspaper Haaretz, told Israel Radio.

He predicted the head of the Shin Bet — known only by the Hebrew initial of his name, KAF — would be forced to resign.

The justice ministry said warnings were being issued to give the recipients time to prepare for when the committee resumes its hearings on Dec. 31.

Prime Minister Shimon Peres, who succeeded Mr. Rabin, appointed the three-man commission of inquiry led by former Chief Justice Meir Shamgar to investigate the security lapse which allowed Amir to shoot Mr. Rabin in the back at close range.

Asked to comment on the warnings on Monday, Mr. Peres told reporters: "We are a country that respects the law. There is an investigating committee. Whatever they will say I shall respect. I don't have any additions and I don't have any changes."

The Shin Bet, founded with the creation of the state in 1948, is responsible for preventing hostile secret activity.

TV to screen Rabin killing video; court opens assassin's trial today

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Private Israeli television announced Monday that it would broadcast for the first time a video showing the murder of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin to coincide with the opening Tuesday of his assassin's trial.

Yigal Amir, a young Jewish radical who boasts that he gunned down Mr. Rabin as an act of "divine justice" to kill the Israeli-Palestinian peace process, is scheduled to appear before a three-judge tribunal Tuesday on charges of premeditated murder.

The 25-year-old law student and anti-peace activist was arrested seconds after the shooting and faces life in prison. A special cell has already been reserved for him in the high-security section of Beersheba prison in the desert.

He faces a separate charge of "conspiracy against the state" in another trial set to begin early next year which includes his brother Hagai, 27, and a Jewish settler, Dror Hadani, 23, both accused of

complicity in Mr. Rabin's murder.

Channel Two television said it had purchased the only known images of the actual killing and planned to broadcast the film despite efforts by the commission investigating the assassination to prevent it being made public.

Israel Radio said the video would be shown Tuesday evening, but the network president, Shalom Kital, said only that the images would be broadcast during prime-time before Friday.

Channel Two reportedly paid \$300,000 for the broadcast rights to an unidentified amateur cameraman who shot the video, but network executives refused to confirm the sum.

The film was shot from the roof of a shopping centre located next to the parking lot where Mr. Rabin was gunned down on Nov. 4 as he left a giant peace rally.

The video was turned over to the investigating commission a month ago and is also

to be shown as evidence at the trial.

Journalists and others who have seen the 80-minute video say it clearly shows the moment when Amir walked up and shot Mr. Rabin twice in the back at point-blank range.

Investigators said the film sequence underscores the total breakdown in security surrounding the prime minister. At one point before the shooting, Amir can be seen chatting with an agent of the Shin Bet internal security service responsible for Mr. Rabin's protection.

Rafi Reshef, a Channel Two journalist who viewed the video, said it showed the parking lot where Mr. Rabin was shot and that it was clear anyone could have entered the zone.

Draconian security was meanwhile being prepared Monday around the Tel Aviv District Court where Amir will be tried, police sources said.

Juppe is chastened as France returns to work

PARIS (Agencies) — France returned to work Monday after three weeks of strike paralysis which observers say has chastened Premier Alain Juppe six months after he took office with a crushing majority government.

Commentators focused on the fact that Mr. Juppe, in the space of 20 days, has been reduced from arrogant defiance to making a number of key concessions in the face of nationwide anger at his welfare reform plans.

"Juppe: the gently way," said the daily France-Soir, reporting Mr. Juppe's comments in a Sunday night TV interview in which he offered six months of talks on implementing his reforms, in addition to a "social summit" later this week.

"Here we see a humble Alain Juppe, launching a wide social dialogue over six months, with a round table

for the unions," said the daily Liberation, under the headline "Juppe: The Social Apprentice."

The comments came as the country's trains, metros and buses continued to lurch back into action after railworkers voted to end strike action which escalated into France's worst social crisis since the May 1968 revolts.

For the first time in three weeks commuters, who for the last 20 days have faced gridlocks, long hikes or simply stayed at home, were able to travel to work in relative comfort. Jams built up around Paris, but nowhere near the scale of the record monster snarl-ups of the last three weeks.

The SNCF national rail authority said 50-60 per cent of services were running nationwide. All Paris' metro lines were running, as were the Eurostar express trains to

London and Brussels. All public transport in Paris was free.

Some areas remained blocked by workers continuing the strike, notably in Marseilles and Bordeaux where Mr. Juppe is mayor. But in general the country was returning to normal in time for Christmas, which many had feared would be disastrously hit.

Unions, however, are vowing to maintain the pressure on Mr. Juppe, looking in particular to the "social summit" Thursday at which Mr. Juppe will broach broad issues of employment, including cutting working hours and youth job creation.

One key union behind the strike, the communist-led CGT, has called for nationwide demonstrations Tuesday to press home the anger at Mr. Juppe's plans.

COLUMN

Red tape robs 'away-from-home' cosmonauts of vote

MOSCOW (R) — Two Russian cosmonauts orbiting the Earth aboard the Mir space station were unable to vote in Sunday's parliamentary elections because they failed to meet new tougher rules for away-from-home voters. Interfax News Agency quoted Russia's Space Flight Centre outside Moscow as saying that the cosmonauts lost their vote when parliament failed to renew rules issuing special cards to voters intending to be away from their district on polling day. The two cosmonauts, Sergei Avdeyev and Yuri Gidzenko, blasted off from the Baikonur Space Centre last Sept. 3 and are due to return to Earth on Feb. 29, more than a month later than originally planned. A German cosmonaut, Thomas Reiter, is also on board the station.

Britain's 'most dangerous pub' to close

LONDON (AFP) — A south London pub dating from the 1930s which police claim has been a haven for criminals most of its existence is due to be closed and demolished, police said. The Saint-Helier Tavern at Carshalton in the southern suburbs of the capital, once employed Charlie Kray, brother of the notorious gangster twins Ronnie and Reggie Kray. According to police, the Kray twins used the pub as a hideout on several occasions. In the last decade alone, the pub has been the scene of a murder and an attempted murder, while a body was cut up there. Shots have been fired and innumerable fights have erupted on the premises. "It is the most dangerous pub in the country," said Inspector Trevor Shepherd of Sutton Police. "The history of this pub has been consistently appalling. ... The regulars were a motley crew of thieves and thugs," he said. "There was a favourite game they used to play of who could slash off the barman's tie closest to his throat," Mr. Shepherd added. The Saint-Helier is owned by Whitbread Breweries who wanted to renovate it completely and reopen it. Local authorities responsible for licensing public houses refused after petitions from local people.

30,000 rabbits attract 30,000 visitors to show

STUTTGART, Germany (AFP) — Some 30,000 rabbits attracted a similar number of visitors to the world's biggest rabbit show ever held over the weekend, organisers said. A total of 5,500 exhibitors from Germany and abroad took part in the show here, displaying rabbits of 68 different breeds.

Police to give out free soft drinks to alcohol-free drivers

BRISBANE, Australia (AFP) — In a promotional coup for Pepsi Cola, police here said Monday they will give away a free can of the soft drink and a congratulatory message to every alcohol-free driver stopped at random breath testing spots Wednesday. Those who fail will be booked. Police throughout the eastern Australian state of Queensland have adopted the theme "a soft drink is a safe drink" during their annual festive season blitz on drunk driving, in an attempt to make motorists more aware of the dangers of driving under the influence of alcohol.

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